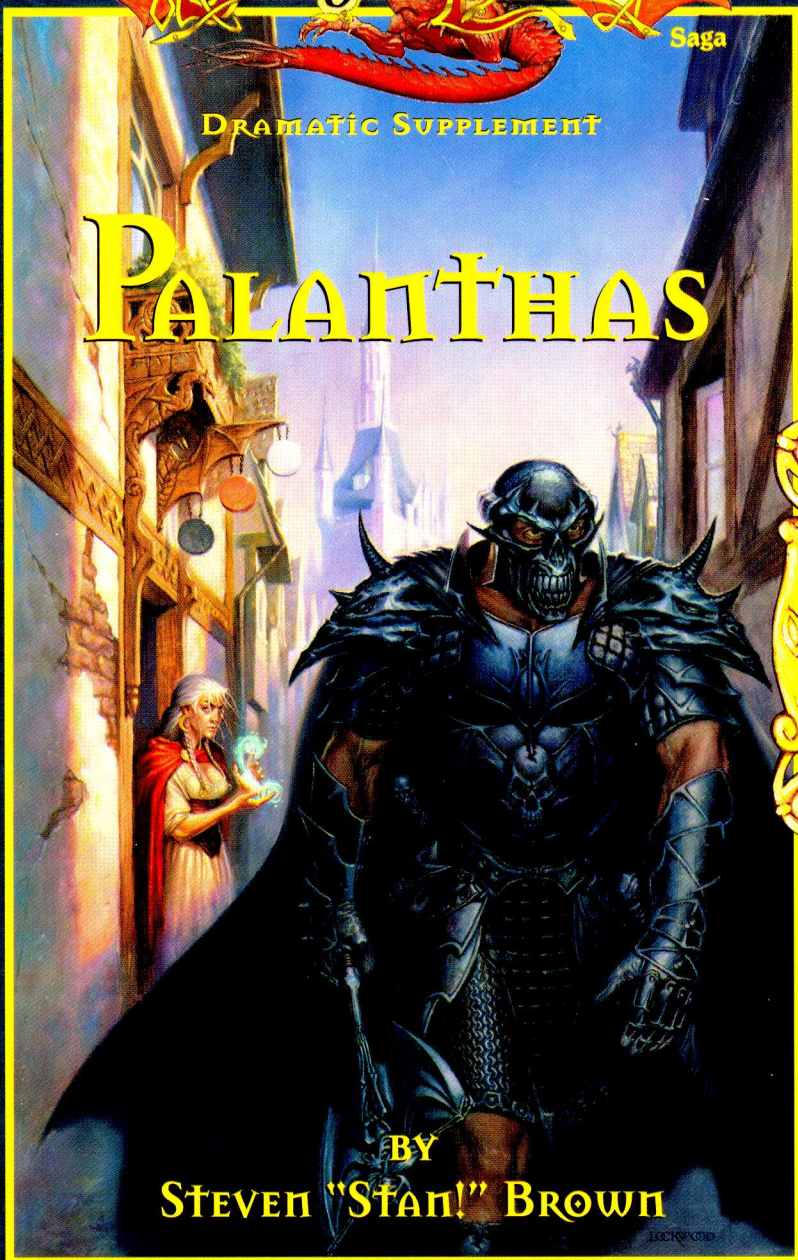




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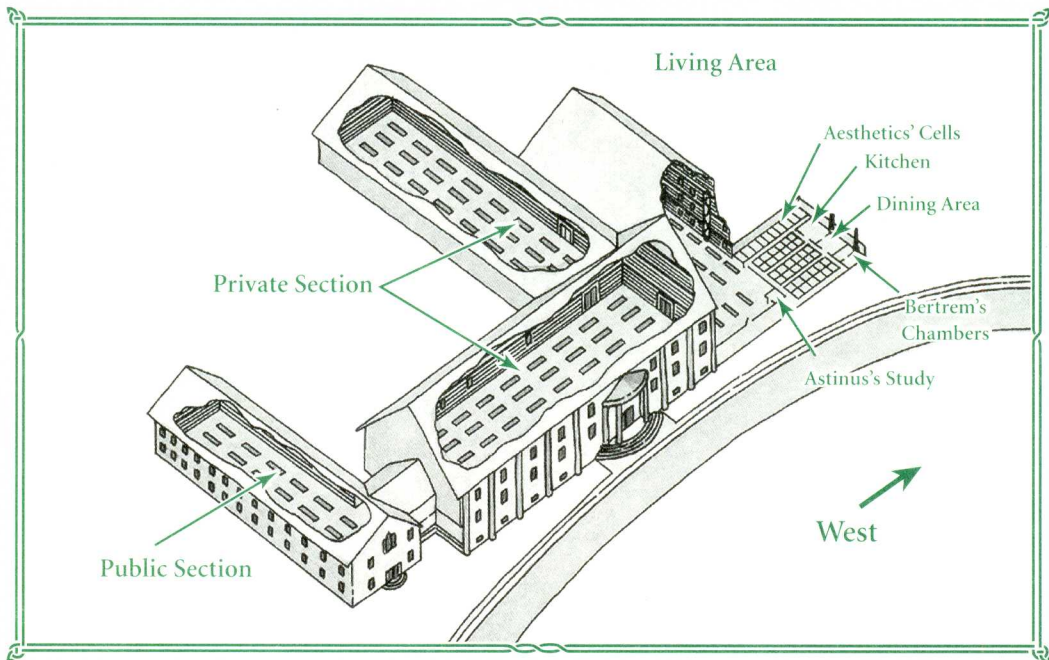
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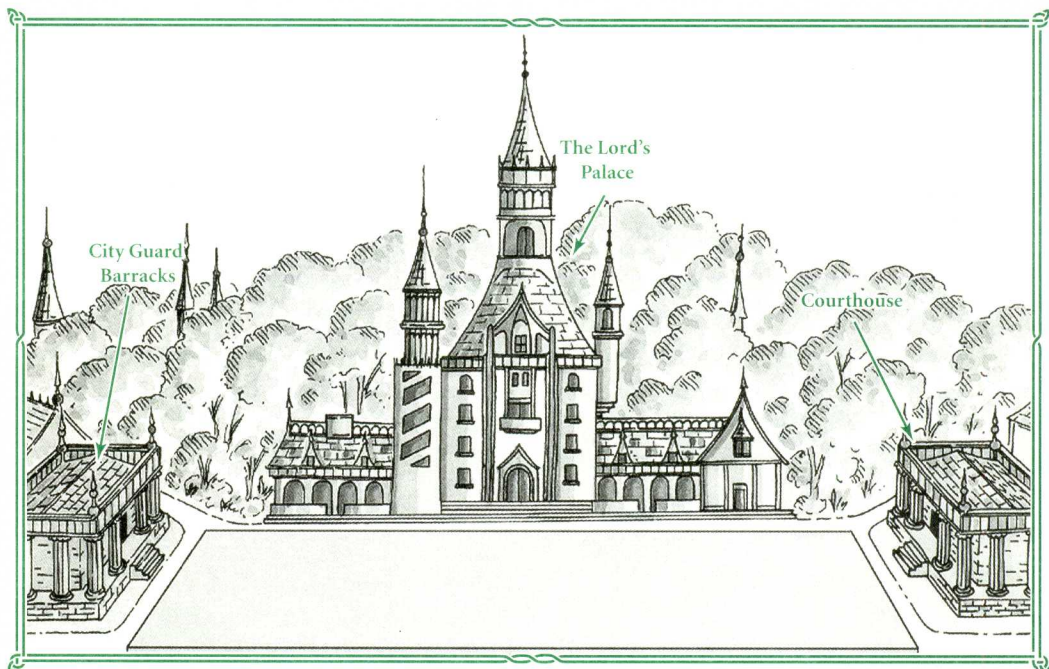
BY
STEVEN "Stan!" BROWN

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THE CENTRAL PLAZA





PALANTHAS



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Dedication:

To Harold Johnson, the man who knows all the secret back roads of Krynn. I could never have written *anything* for the DRAGONLANCE world without your support.
Best of luck in your new life outside the office!

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Author's Foreword



If you woke up tomorrow morning and found yourself on Krynn, where would you go? Maybe you'd start with Foghaven Vale or the Inn of the Last Home or one of the other "tourist sites" of Krynn; but if you wanted to find a way to get home, or someplace that you could exchange your watch, wallet, and wardrobe for more suitable attire, you'd go to Palanthas, right?

Of course you would! Palanthas is the most metropolitan city in Ansalon.

But what do you know about the city of Palanthas? Not much really. Check your facts. You have a rough idea of when it was founded. You know the details of about a half-dozen important buildings. And you know various anecdotes about things that happened there. But you know almost nothing about the city itself. This book is meant to change all that!

The first game product (other than the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game itself) that I remember being completely blown away by was *City-State of the Invincible Overlord*. Here was an entire city in a box. I knew what was sold in every shop on every corner, and I knew what each merchant's goals and weaknesses were, who was trustworthy and who was likely to "accidentally" short-change you. No matter where my players went, I knew exactly what they'd find. Okay, maybe it wasn't *that* complete, but it was quite a heady experience for a young Dungeon Master who was struggling with the difficulties of inventing and populating entire cities. In today's games that devote so much time and space to roleplaying and telling stories, the information in that box might seem spotty and incomplete, but it was the "storytelling supplement" of its day.

As I began work on this book, I made it a goal to create the same sense of completeness for Palanthas that I felt when I first read *City-State of the Invincible Overlord*. Of course, the SAGA® rules make a different game than D&D® (or AD&D®) rules do, and what worked in the games of the late 1970s is often not acceptable in the games of the late 1990s. Still, I had a goal—which is always a good way to begin.

The bulk of *Palanthas* is written "in voice"; it's more or less a guided tour of the city given by an average citizen; in other words it reflects the opinions of a character living in Palanthas and may contain some popular misconceptions (the "sewer monsters" on page 78 are a good example). The text found in the sidebars, however, is source material for the Narrator and holds no hidden fallacies. Players may freely read the main text, as it is considered common knowledge, but should refrain from reading the boxed text—which also contains story seeds and important Palanthian characters—without their Narrator's permission.

I don't want to waste time telling you what you're about to read—I want you to actually *read* it. However, I would like you to know what I *hope* you'll find in this book.

I hope you'll find the entire city of Palanthas.

I hope when you put this book down you'll have a better sense for where your heroes can go *after* they visit the Temple of Paladine, or *while they're waiting* for an audience with Lord Xavier. I hope when they wander into a strange part of town, you'll know just what type of people they'll meet. I hope the next time you read a DRAGONLANCE story and the characters visit Palanthas, you feel like you know the place—like you've visited there before.

So if you ever *do* wake up one morning and find yourself on Krynn, you'll not only know to go to Palanthas, you'll know which neighborhoods to look for—and which to avoid.

Stan!

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CHAPTER ONE



he city had been fabled even during the Age of Might for its beauty and grace. There was no other city on Krynne that could compare to it. . . .

—Tasslehoff sets off to explore Palanthas, Dragons of Spring Dawning

I am the Herald, singer of songs, teller of tales. My memories are those of Krynne; her history is my life.

Tonight you have asked me to speak of Palanthas, the shining jewel among the cities of Ansalon, indeed all of Krynne. Many of you, I dare say, have visited Palanthas more than once in your lives, but how many of you know her tale? Can any among you say why the grandest of man's settlements lies hidden between a nearly impenetrable range of mountains and an isolated, otherwise insignificant bay along a rocky stretch of coastline that no right-minded sailor would bring his ship near?

It is a seldom told tale, filled with unsung heroes and forgotten truths. Listen closely, for after this evening you may never hear this tale again.

The Wreck of the *Bright Horizon*

About two thousand years before the sinking of Istar, war raged across the face of Ansalon. Elf, dwarf, and human took arms against one another, making it impossible for peace-loving folk to eke out a living from the land or the sea. No

one doubted that the battles were true, just, and necessary, but quite a few farmers wished they would simply happen somewhere farther away from their fields.

One such group of farmers, tired of having their crops burned, looted, or trampled by the various armies, packed up their families and all their belongings and signed on to the crew of the good ship *Bright Horizon*.

The ship sailed from Tarsis, first west then north, following the coastline. As she passed the tip of Hylo, she headed out to open seas, commanded by her captain, a fiery man named Agril Stargazer. Captain Stargazer had heard wondrous tales of the legendary Dragon Isles, and he hoped that he could help his passengers find a peaceful new home there.

Sadly, this was never to be.

After only two days on the open sea, the *Bright Horizon* sailed headlong into a storm the likes of which her crew (all able seamen) had never before seen. The tempest tossed the ship around like a child's plaything, and the crew lost all sense of direction as waves hundreds of feet tall blocked out the sky.

Soon, it became impossible to tell day from night, but it made no difference; the storm raged unabated for days. Nearly half the crew disappeared over the rails, carried away to watery graves by back-breaking winds or impossibly huge waves. As the hold filled with water faster than the remaining crew could bail it, the end seemed to be mere moments away.

At that moment a tiny, hoarse voice pierced the storm.

"Land ho!"

The lookout, who had lashed himself to the main mast, and whom everyone had given up for dead after the first wave swamped the ship, pointed straight ahead. The waves were carrying the *Bright Horizon* straight toward a stark, rocky shoreline.

It took Captain Stargazer and three other men to turn the wheel hard over and hold it there. Though the rudder urged the ship away from the rapidly approaching cliff face, the sea seemed to maliciously fight the crew's efforts.

The entire ship lifted clean out of the water as it bounced off a submerged boulder. A yeoman reported anxiously that a twenty-foot section of the keel had been torn free, and the sea was rushing freely into the hold.

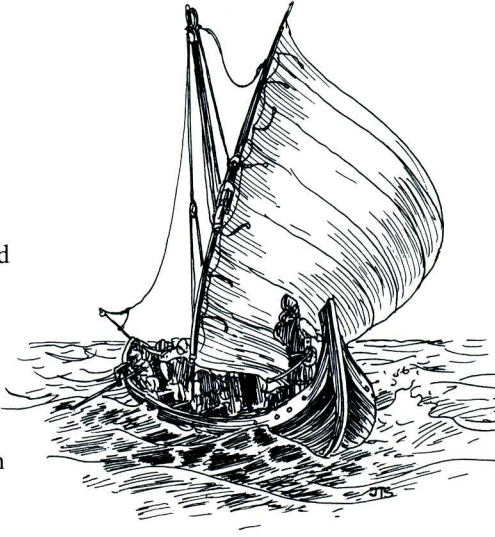
Still, rather than sinking, the *Bright Horizon* sped through a gap in the cliff face, urged on by a strong tide and one last wave crashing over her aft railing. Once through the gap, though the storm raged on, the waters calmed almost completely.

The crew could see the waterline rising on the hull minute by minute. Nothing could save the *Bright Horizon*, and Captain Stargazer ordered all hands to remain on board until the ship was almost ready to go under. He feared that if they jumped out too soon, the tide might carry the castaways back into the roiling sea.

As it turns out, though, the crew never had to abandon ship. The *Bright Horizon* wedged herself between a large rock and the towering cliff wall, not three hundred yards from what looked like a completely hospitable, if somewhat rocky, beach.

The crew and passengers quickly transferred all salvageable goods to shore, since the captain believed a strong low tide would suck the ship right back out into the open sea. Only then did the captain and crew look at the place they had landed: a stark, grassy plain, surrounded on all sides by great mountains—stunning in its raw, natural beauty and unlike anything they had ever seen living on the plains.

And there, set back a mile or so from the water, was a single, tall tower surrounded by a forest. When Captain Stargazer approached the tower and it



protective grove, though, he found himself awash with waves of fear. Clearly someone didn't want them to visit the strange tower. The captain took this in stride, though, and promptly started ignoring the tower and its grove of trees.


"Our quest is complete, ladies and gentlemen!" the captain bellowed. "We must have reached the Dragon Isles!"

Hearth and Home

Of course, it wasn't long before Agril Stargazer, who now refused the title of captain ("My rank sank with the *Bright Horizon*."), realized his error. His sextant and charts told him the truth: They had come to ground in a lonely inlet along the northern Vingaard Mountains—the very site that Palanthas lies today. But it mattered little to the marooned crew; they might as well have been on the Dragon Isles, or even the surface of Lunitari for all it mattered. They had no way of getting home, nor even of letting anyone know where they were.

What's more, whoever lived in the tower had no interest whatever in communicating with the settlers. The forest





of fear remained raised, and though a silhouette could occasionally be seen in one or another of the windows near the summit, no one ever came out.

The settlers dismantled the *Bright Horizon* and used her to build houses and small fishing boats (not much more than skiffs with sails). The former farmers plowed and sowed the few viable acres nestled among the mountains, and though the peaks appeared too rugged for anyone to get through, they were home to an easily domesticated species of goat. The castaways flourished, but the community would almost certainly have perished within a generation (only three women survived the trip), if not for a curious happening the next Spring.

Flag of Truce

About the time the survivors prepared to celebrate the one-year anniversary of their new “colony” (for that was how they referred to their new home), the skies darkened again as powerful storms swept in from the north. On the morning of the vernal equinox, the town awoke to find a ship anchored less than a hundred yards offshore.

As they watched, a dozen or so sailors scrambled into a skiff and rowed toward the gathering crowd. When the boat reached the beach, a powerfully built, half-elf woman with a braid of blood-red hair nearly as long as she was and a stare as steely cold as the sword she drew stepped ashore.

This was the infamous pirate Firebrand, and she insisted that the survivors immediately explain their presence. It seems that she and her crew used this secluded bay to wait out gales and to lay low when the Ergothian navy was too close on their trail.

Agri! Stargazer took her to the building that served as town hall, showing her the door frame built from a patch of hull bearing the inscription “Bright Horizon.” Though he told her the tale of the colony and asked her to carry his

people to civilization as soon as the storms passed, Stargazer rather thought that Firebrand would decide to simply kill them all in order to preserve the hideout’s secrecy. To his surprise though, the pirate made a counter-proposal.

Firebrand explained that she had struck a bargain with the people who lived in the tower when they ventured out one day while she was visiting for the tenth or eleventh time. She learned that the tower was dedicated to the practice of High Sorcery—very much like the towers in Istar and Wayreth. Though the mages wanted no contact with other people, they occasionally needed supplies, while Firebrand occasionally needed a place to anchor to avoid capture. In exchange for provisions, the crew could come ashore for recreation while they awaited the order to sail again.

However, the pirate crew was growing tired of being unable to enjoy their ill-gotten booty. They were too well known and could no longer put in at any sizable port. She would supply the colony with lumber, provisions, and anything else they needed *if* they would build a town where the pirates would always be welcome.

Since the only other choice was death on a buccaneer’s sword, the colonists all agreed.

The Secret City

The ramshackle collection of houses grew into a respectable hamlet, and then into a town worthy of the title. Through most of the year the residents, whose numbers were bolstered by slaves and captives for whom the pirates could get no ransom, farmed and fished. Families were started, and the town (which the survivors now called “Bright Horizon”) began to feel like a home.

Even the wizards from the Tower of High Sorcery finally accepted the settlers as permanent neighbors. They began frequenting the shops and inns



of Bright Horizon, though they made it clear that reciprocal visits would be tolerated only in the most dire of circumstances.

About once every season, though, Firebrand's ship would sail up to Bright Horizon's newly constructed pier (for the bay formed a natural deep water port), and her crew would sweep into town to drink to excess and carouse with the locals. On occasion, she would even sail in with one of her compatriots and his crew to share the marvelous little town that had no choice but to welcome them.

During one such visit, Agril Stargazer angrily interrupted Firebrand's festivities. While the comforts of Bright Horizon were obviously Firebrand's for the taking, he insisted that anyone not of her own crew pay a fair price for their revelry.


The drunken pirate drew her sword and threatened to run Stargazer through if he didn't get his brazen face out of her sight. But the former captain simply

stared her down with the same look he had used to quell mutiny-minded seamen. Firebrand was impressed with the man's courage, so impressed that she immediately instituted a law: All commodities in Bright Horizon now came at a price equal to the prevailing rates in Daltigoth.

Next, she grabbed Stargazer by the scruff of the neck and kissed him full on the lips. This was the beginning of a whirlwind courtship that shortly led to Firebrand's giving up her captaincy and taking on the role of the first political leader of Bright Horizon.

Soon, every pirate on the high seas knew about Bright Horizon. And, safe from the prying eyes of the imperial navy, they gladly paid out fortunes in gold coins for the simple luxury of living like normal folk.

Within ten years, the town was on every smuggler's charts. It became the place to conduct business that the authorities in Istar or Ergoth might



object to. Anything could be had in Bright Horizon—for a price.

After twenty years, all notable map-makers included the city on their charts. Bright Horizon became known as the one port that every trader simply *must* frequent, a quality (if not yet the name) that people recognize it for to this day. The city grew in size and reputation over the next two hundred years, and it very well might have remained Bright Horizon to this day if not for the efforts of one man—Vinas Solamnus.

A Vision of Greatness

Although Bright Horizon was among the largest ports on the continent at the time Vinas Solamnus broke free from the tyrannical grip of the Ergothian emperor (during the Rose Rebellion in 1799–1791PC), most folk spoke of the city in hushed, fearful whispers. They knew it as a place where pirates and rogues drank bitter grog and made plans to take hard-earned gold from the pockets of honest farmers and merchants. No one of high morals would go there.

However, the father of Solamnia saw the city as more than a blight on his new country—he saw it as a symbol of Solamnia’s future soul.

Late in his life, Vinas Solamnus received a vision from Paladine himself. The vision caused the great leader to form the Knights of Solamnia, but many scholars say it had another effect as well. They say it also told him that the city of Bright Horizon lay on sacred ground, the exact spot on which Paladine first stepped foot on Krynn. To this day, scholars and theologians maintain that the city rests on Paladine’s footprint.

When he returned from his sojourn, Vinas addressed the Solamnian noblemen. A speech that is best remembered for being the first to mention a knight-hood dedicated to the gods, Solamnus closed with this call to action:

“Bright Horizon! Though no way to the site exists but to cross a forbidding sea and pass through a treacherous inlet, still a city was raised there. Though naught but untillable land and the vilest of men exist there, that city has prospered. The Father of Good himself was the first to walk that land, and yet we revile the place—we call it unclean. Is this right? No, I tell you! Join with me, my brothers, and we shall reclaim this place. And then the city will have a bright horizon indeed, for from it we will strike down all the enemies of Good! We will rename it in honor of the Master of Justice—from this day forward, let the city be known as Palanthas!”

With that speech, and the knowledge of Paladine’s divine plan, Vinas Solamnus rallied the support of not only the peoples of Solamnia, but also the dwarves of Thorbardin and, to a lesser extent, the elves of both Silvanesti and Qualinesti. They put aside old rivalries and set to work turning Palanthas into a city worthy of the Father of Good’s name—transforming it into the city we know today.

The Jewel of Solamnia

Palanthas was designed to be a city for the ages, and it succeeded in this—perhaps a bit too well. Its remote locale coupled with its history of independence (some would say rebelliousness) made it a place that people of all nations could call home, and the Solamnians could never quite call their own.

As Palanthas grew, the mages in the Tower of High Sorcery became more and more disgruntled. A town was one thing, but when they chose this site because of its adherence to the guidelines set by Megistal of the Red Robes, they also appreciated its remoteness from civilization. Now a city grew around it! Thankfully for them and their wish for privacy, the wizards that built the tower had also cast a spell that created a thick stand of

trees that surrounded their tower with both a physical barrier and a magical aura of fear. Thus was born the Shoikan Grove, which keeps out many people to this day.

Though the Knights built a road leading through the mountains and an unsailable fortress to guard it, the people of Palanthas yet thought themselves more closely tied to the sea than any country. While the city was certainly a hub of activity for the young knighthood, it remained isolated from the arena of Solamnian politics. A Palanthian government sprang up around the city's Lord, Kinnath Homestead, appointed by Vinas Solamnus himself, but likewise able to trace his lineage directly back to Firebrand and Stargazer.

However, unlike all the other Solamnian cities, duchies, and baronies, Palanthas did not fall under autocratic rule. Lord Kinnath saw that despite the rhetoric spewed by the other landed nobles and proclaiming Palanthas "the jewel of Solamnian," the young country had too many other troubles and too many people vying for power and position; they would never supply him with the resources he needed to thrive. No, Palanthas would live or die with the merchant ships that visited her port—just as she had for two hundred years—and so it was to them that Lord Kinnath owed his greatest allegiance.

He established a City Senate, with the senators drawn from the great merchant families (who all maintained palatial estates in the hills overlooking the city) as well as landless nobles (who, while the social equal of their landed cousins, had no real power in the new capital of Solanthus). For appearance's sake, Lord Kinnath also installed a representative of the Solamnian Knighthood, the city's Lord Knight, who was to be a symbol of justice for the people and a resource of wisdom and piety (based on the Solamnian Measure) for the city's leaders; in reality the position was merely ornamental and held no real sway over the politicians or the public.

It was a system that pleased nearly everyone. The Solamnian Knights, already embroiled in squabbling over interpretations of the Measure, were satisfied with the city's show of fealty. Also, merchants from all over the continent were satisfied that they would still have a nearly unregulated trading port, even though Palanthas now swore allegiance to Solamnian.

For himself and his office, Lord Kinnath reserved the right of leadership. Though the senate made most of the day-to-day decisions that affected residents of Palanthas, the city's lord held sway over such grand institutions as public holidays, parades, and weddings (no marriage was considered truly blessed until the Lord of Palanthas kissed the foreheads of both the bride and the groom, a gesture Lord Kinnath almost never withheld). Such authority made him the central figure in every joyful affair throughout the city.

It was, indeed, an idyllic arrangement. The city of Palanthas continued to prosper and grow, and though it had connections with every civilized place in Ansalon, it yet remained removed from the unpleasant consequences of wars, plagues, and famines. In fact, even the fall of Istar, the Cataclysm that reshaped the entire world, affected Palanthas only by reducing her number of trading partners.

Cynical folk (mostly from places other than Palanthas) will point out that the Cataclysm may have been the best thing that ever happened to the city. It left Palanthas as the only deep water port still functioning, and the only place in all of Ansalon that a merchant could be guaranteed to find the goods he desired. The city was also the only popular center of learning and spiritualism left standing (though the library of Ergoth yet lay complete and utterly ignored where Vinas Solamnus and his men left it). Most folk believe that this time of unparalleled prosperity in the face of continent-wide disaster is the source of Palanthians' haughty attitude toward the rest of the world.





Time seemed to have no meaning to the city. Wars, leaders, and even dragons and the gods themselves came and went, and still Palanthalas stood proud and tall. The Solamnic Knights who named and built the city fell from grace, and yet the city herself grew and grew.

Can you really blame her residents for believing that they lived in a city blessed by the gods of old, and that anyone living elsewhere was simply a bumpkin who passed through this world without ever really experiencing it?

Perhaps not.

However, then you can neither blame the rest of the world for being less than sympathetic when calamity finally found its way to the gates of Palanthalas.

Blue Lady and Death Knight

Through most of the Age of Despair, Palanthalas thrived. Though dedicated to the gods of old and home to more temples than any other place in Ansalon, the city came to represent all that was secular and fleeting. Certainly, knowledge and truth lived in Palanthalas as well. Astinus Lorekeeper sat in the heart of the city and penned his histories, and the University of Palanthalas grew from a group of scholars into as fine an academy of learning as any in the world. But still, the business of Palanthalas was business; merchants traveled from every corner of Ansalon—by boat, caravan, and even on griffin-back—to buy and sell in the city's vaunted marketplace.

The War of the Lance came, engulfed practically all the known world in turmoil, yet Palanthalas remained untouched (though the war occurred through the heroic efforts of the revived Solamnic Knighthood defending the Tower of the High Clerist).

The gods themselves returned to Krynn, but the only real effect for the city was the dedication of a new, magnificent shrine to Paladine in the heart of town.

The people of Palanthalas became even more secure in their faith that, despite what happened in the rest of the world, their city would always stand tall and proud—the very symbol of all that is right and true on Krynn. They remained unafraid and proud right up until the approach of a flying citadel blackened the skies and an undead knight stood at their gates.

Lord Soth and Kitiara uth Matar (better known as the Blue Lady) did in one day what no army in all of history had ever accomplished: raze Palanthalas. By the day's end, more than half the city lay in ruins or rubble. It might have spelled the end of Palanthalas itself if not for the legendary Heroes of the Lance. Somehow, they managed to snatch victory from Takhisis's minions, killing the Blue Lady and driving the death knight back to his haunted castle in Nightlund.

It was a stunning day for the people of Palanthalas who, through the will of the gods and the sacrifice of nearly every Solamnic Knight in the city, managed to survive the siege. A more pious and spiritual folk might fall immediately to prayer, thanking Paladine for sparing them and swearing to rededicate their lives and their city in his name. The people of Palanthalas, however, were far too worldly for this.

They immediately set about rebuilding the city and, of course, the Temple of Paladine. However, while the architecture showed deference to the city's namesake, and the scholars spoke of a greater worldview, the people remained aloof and unconnected to the rest of Ansalon.

"Palanthalas has felt the tread of invading boots," they seemed to be saying, "it has been overrun by the dead and yet it still stands. Clearly this *is* the chosen city of Paladine, and it will never fall again."

Palanthalas Falls

The Summer of Chaos, of course, proved the people wrong. Again the forces of Evil moved across the land, and





again Palanthas was among the last bastions of freedom remaining. Not content to rely on divine intervention, the city and the Solamnic Knights prepared a complete defense against the Knights of Takhisis. But in this instance, it was not enough.

Some say that Paladine was too busy fighting against Chaos to help defend his city. Others say that the gods struck a bargain amongst themselves, one that allowed Takhisis full sway over Ansalon. No matter what the reason, the truth remains that after safely guarding the overland route to the city for centuries, the Tower of the High Clerist fell to the Dark Knights in a single day, and the city itself days later.

Much to the surprise of Palanthians everywhere, the Knights did not raze the city, rather they merely ousted the existing government and took over control themselves. It was a rule of unyielding law that, while restrictive and unforgiving, allowed life to go on at almost the same pace as it always had. However, the Knights disbanded the City Senate and took all power from Lord Amothus's hands, which did not sit well with the city's population.

When most of the Dark Knights left the city to fight the war against Chaos, the citizenry ached for freedom. They were afraid to act, however, for fear of retribution when the Knights returned. When they saw how the Battle of the Rift had thinned the order's ranks, though, the Palanthians took up arms and ran the occupying forces into the bay.

Surely, the citizens thought, we have fought for our lost freedom and won it forever. Less than a year later, though, the Knights returned, marching under the banner of Skie the Blue.

With the dragon's help, the city supposedly built on Paladine's footprint, dedicated in his name, and symbolizing freedom from the day of its inception, fell under the permanent rule of the Knights of Takhisis.

Life Goes On

The Dark Knights learned something from their previous occupation. This time they allowed the political institutions to go on unchanged, but they insinuated themselves behind the scenes—the puppeteers pulling the government's strings. The public had at least the illusion of continuity, and the Knights had the buffer of pawns on which to blame unpopular decisions—and there have been plenty of those.

Now a much stronger military presence walks the streets of Palanthas, and merchants pay a significantly steeper tariff for importing or exporting goods, but the city still holds the position of the most important trading port in Ansalon.

Of course, all visitors to Palanthas, whether they come by sea or land, must register with the City Guard and must abide by a list of regulations as tall as a kender. Also, a pair of guards stands at every gate in the Old City Wall, preventing unsavory characters from passing into or out of that district.

But still the trading goes on. The allure of Palanthas calls to the farmer and the fisherman. Kender, dwarves, elves, and minotaurs all hope that their paths will lead them to this gleaming white city where anything may be had—for a price.



CHAPTER TWO



e lifted our astonished eyes and saw wide, stone paved roads rising into the Vingaard Mountains, the highways thick with caravan traffic. Homes and gardens covered the lower slopes. Towers of every

sort, some higher than three stories, stood out over the city itself. Everywhere we looked there was color, activity, noise, and life. . .

*—Sailing into Palanthalas,
“There Is Another Shore, You
Know, Upon the Other Side”,
The Dragons of Chaos*

Palanthalas! The grandest of all cities in Ansalon, the Jewel of Solamnia, now rests uneasily under the control of the Knights of Takhisis. Though you know the history, you will have little use of it when walking the streets in search of a bed or a warm meal. For more practical information about Palanthalas, it is wise to turn to the people who know her best.

Bertrem's Dissertation

*—As written on the third day
of Reapember in 34sc.*

One cannot hope, in a simple thesis, to provide a truly accurate understanding of a city as large, not to mention as grand, as Palanthalas. On the other hand, one can provide a basic measure of information that allows the reader to begin his or her

exploration of the city with a modicum of confidence.

Along the northern coast of Solamnia lies a fjord whose entrance bears the name “Gates of Paladine.” It is a fairly uninviting stretch of sea, I’m told, and would be avoided completely if the channel, known as the Bay of Branchala, were not the only effective way to approach the most important trading city in the known world.

Palanthalas, located at the base of the bay, starts at the water’s edge and continues on high into the Vingaard Mountains. The city is built more or less like a tremendous wheel; a series of concentric circular roads ripple out from the Central Plaza, breaking the city into rings. The third such road runs against a tremendous wall that splits the city in two. The central area protected by the wall is called the Old City, while all the remaining districts exist together under the unimaginative appellation of the New City.

Eight great avenues also radiate from the Central Plaza. These tree-lined roads all pass through the Old City Wall (except for the northern road, which ends where it meets the waters of the bay) and continue into the mountains until the land becomes too steep to support free-standing structures. It should come as no surprise that the city’s sections divide it into clearly delineated districts and quarters.

The Old City contains some of the most famous (and infamous) structures known across Ansalon, including the Lord’s Palace, the



WELCOME TO PALANTHAS ~

Temple of Paladine, and the Great Library. It also has dozens of commercial piers and what is widely considered to be the best supplied market anywhere—goods from across the continent arrive daily. This section of Palanthas is home to the city government, the city elders, and both the richest and poorest of citizens.

The New City consists mostly of residential districts, though the type of housing ranges from hovel to mansion depending on the particular section one visits. Also found in this section are the University of Palanthas, the Old Temple District (which contains houses of worship that have been continuously active since before the Cataclysm), and another shopping district (which specializes in the goods brought in by overland merchants). Only one way exists for these caravans to enter the city: a long, winding pass through the mountains from the Tower of the High Clerist, once the city's greatest defense against invasion.

Surrounding Palanthas is nothing but high, rocky peaks for as far as the eye can see. Clearly then, the city is reliant upon its trading partners for practically every necessity. Food cannot be grown in Palanthas, cattle cannot thrive, miners cannot mine ore, and people cannot find wood, let alone chop it. Without a steady supply of provisions from the outside world, the city and all within her would perish within months.

Despite the fact that they rely so much on their trading partners, the citizens of Palanthas have a deserved reputation for being among the most snobbish and aloof people on the continent. Often,

they have heard that their city is worthy of bearing the name of the god Paladine. However, though people from elsewhere resent the Palanthians' haughty attitude, most of them visit it at least once in their lifetimes.

Considering the lack of respect that Palanthians reserve for the rest of the world, I find it somewhat surprising to find that they have nothing but forbearance for even the most eccentric of their

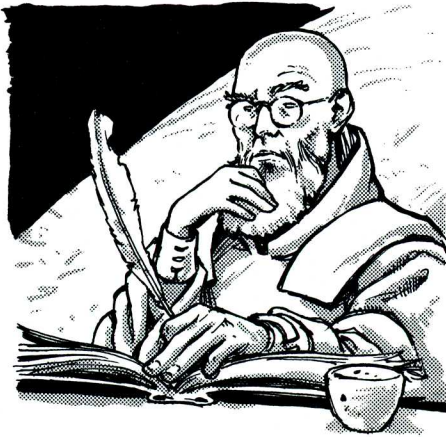
Palanthian neighbors. If you come from Palanthas, the message seems to be, you are one of us no matter how odd you may be. Conversely, if you are not a Palanthian, no matter how similar our tastes, you are an outsider and a bumpkin.

Another part of the place's charm may be its geo-

graphic latitude. Palanthas resides far enough to the north that the city enjoys balmy weather throughout the year. While the summers can bring us unbearable heat, there is no dearth of water in which overheated Palanthians may swim for relief.

Even in these dangerous days when dragons the size of mountains rule great portions of the continent, and the forces of the Dark Queen have conquered Palanthas herself, the city still acts as a bastion of commerce. Throughout the ages, the city has weathered far worse than this and come through strengthened by the experience.

Whether through cock-eyed optimism or stubborn refusal to accept the obvious, most Palanthians continue to live, die, and plan for the future as though the world has always revolved around the city of Palanthas.



Lord Xavier's Spring Dawning Festival Speech

—As given on the twenty-first
of Brookgreen in the year 34sc.

Greetings friends, neighbors, and honored visitors. There may yet be a chill in the air, but the warmth of your enthusiasm makes it a fine day indeed!

We have come through another winter, and as we prepare for the rebirth that spring provides, let us stop to celebrate the wonder that is life. We Palanthians have many occasions to celebrate during the year: the birth of a child, or the anniversary of a wedding. And a joyous occasion for any Palanthian uplifts us all.

Today we celebrate the end of winter, the season of cold and death—less potent in this part of the world than most. Some of you have traveled many leagues to celebrate with us; perhaps a dove landed on your windowsill carrying an invitation to join us. Every fall we release these birds as part of our Festival of Knights as a way of enticing folks to join us here and of giving them something to look forward to through the long, lonely winter.

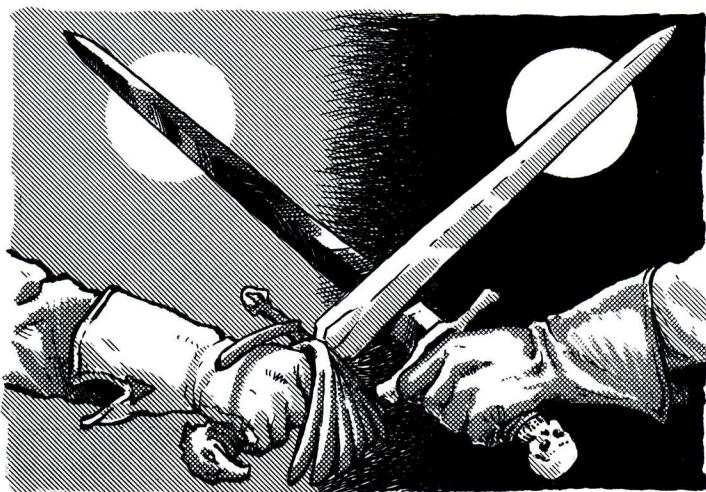
Whatever moved you to be here, though, I speak for all of Palanthas when I say that we are glad to see you. You'll find the streets filled with vendors preparing the most delicious foods you've ever tasted and the taverns filled with merry-makers from every corner of Ansalon. Throw aside

whatever cares you may have, and join them in revelry.

In a few moments you'll witness a battle unlike any you've ever seen. On the plaza below me wait two Knights; the one dressed all in white represents the winter, while the Knight in green, representing the coming spring, is none other than our own Lord Knight, Sir Kinsaid. The two will enter a furious battle to decide the fate of the coming season. Should the White Knight prevail, winter will grip the land until midsummer's day. If the Green Knight can vanquish his foe, though, he will lead us into an early spring and a fruitful summer.

I consider it an honor to have the Lord Knight take part in these festivities, and I am reminded how symbolic this mock battle is of the job Sir Kinsaid does for this city every day. Though forces in the world conspire to rise up to Palanthas's level by chopping us down, Sir Kinsaid battles to fend them off. With the aid and support of the City Senate and, of course, the Lord of Palanthas, he not only protects our interests at home and abroad but also helps us grow.

The coffers of every Palanthian contain more now than they did at this time a year ago. Our merchants send caravans across the land and over the sea, reaching every city, town, and village from Ergoth to Kothas. When they return, they bring not only the riches they have



earned on the way but also goods from every corner of the world. Where else in Ansalon can a gnome from Mount Nev-ermind and a member of the Silvanesti House Mystic sit together and discuss the merits of centaur-made bows?

Yes, we have much to celebrate, and luckily there are plenty of holidays to provide us excuses to do so. If you do not get to see or do something that you wish to during this Spring Dawning Festival, remember that Peace Day will be here in less than three months.

If you enjoy the mock battle we are about to witness, then be sure to come to the Central Plaza early on Peace Day when Palanthis will host an actual jousting tournament. See the greatest of Takhisis's Knights battle one another in honorable combat to be crowned the Hero of Palanthis. This lucky Knight will receive the honor of a dance with every maiden at the Peace Day Fête and spend the next year as my personal bodyguard.

In the fall, of course, we celebrate Festival of Knights, where we thank the guardians of Palanthis for all they have done for us throughout the year. Thankfully, the disrespectful tradition of common louts mocking the Knights has been nearly eradicated. If you come across the shameful display of two paupers wearing buckets on their heads and beating one another with broom handles, report it to the City Guard.

Each segment of Palanthian society celebrates our festivals in its own, unique way. If you are blessed enough to call Nobles' Hill your home, or lucky enough to devote your life to serving in the government, you will always find a gala or banquet to attend.

Of course, the swelling ranks of merchants also serve great feasts with meats and fruits from ports across the map, drinking elven mead to wash down a venison steak marinated in spices from the Blood Sea Isles, then finishing the evening with a Hylo pastry and exotic barbarian tea.

The common folk, though, throw the wildest of celebrations, and I myself, in my younger days, had been known to sneak away from a staid cotillion in order to dance and drink at an inn lower on the hill. These gatherings can last late into the night and quite often into the next day.

However you choose to celebrate this time of rebirth, be sure that you

indulge your mind as well as your body. There are sights to be seen in Palanthis that can be found nowhere else—and almost none of them are located inside taverns. Visit the Great Library or one of the city's many magnificent temples. And before you return to wherever you call home, spend at least a day in one of our shopping districts—what you find may surprise you.

It is my greatest hope—no!—my most fervent belief that when we gather here again next spring, we will all be happier, wiser, and most of all, wealthier than we are today!

Now, Sir Kinsaid, slay yon White Knight and usher in spring—LET THE FESTIVAL COMMENCE!



Sir Kinsaid's Peace Day Speech

—As given on the twelfth day
of Fleurgreen in 34sc.

Citizens of Palanthas, we stand here today to commemorate the deliverance of our fair city from the hands of fools. In the wake of the war against Chaos, the city was stripped from its rightful rulers, the Knights of Takhisis, and left to flounder on its own. Much like Palanthas's founders themselves, the city was faltering on a stormy sea with no way to find the shore. Luckily, the Dark Queen, in her infinite wisdom, led her servants here, and we rescued the city and all her citizens from mortal danger.

The Knights of Takhisis quelled the fighting that raged in the city streets. We replaced the antiquated precepts, which allowed the city to come to this sad condition, and exchanged them with a rule of hard but fair law. Likewise, we removed the power mongers and influence peddlers who turned the once-proud City Senate into a body of corrupt, self-serving dotards, and gave Palanthas the government it deserves—a strong Senate and a Lord who understands the way the world should work. It is my privilege to serve as the liaison between that government, the leadership in Neraka, and our lord Khelendros, and to hold the title of Lord Knight of Palanthas and allow the city to achieve the destiny it was created for—to serve the Dark Queen.

Of all the duties of my office, the one I treasure most is conducting the Peace

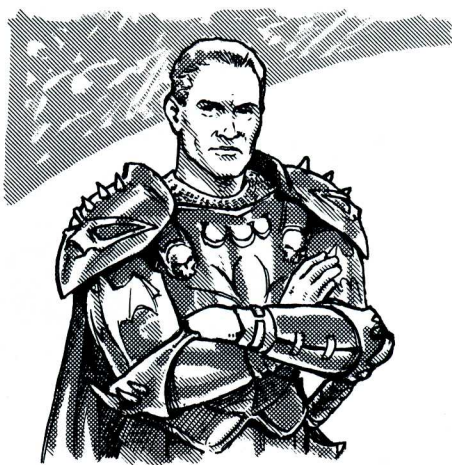
Day ceremonies. It reminds me of not only the principle and dignity that the Knighthood stands for, but also of the responsibility I have willingly accepted: the obligation to do more than defend Palanthas from her enemies (both secular and spiritual), but also to lead her people toward the path of nobility and honor. This is not an easy job, but it is one that I relish.

Walking the figurative road we do is not easy, but living a righteous life never is. Some citizens among us do not see the goal for which we strive as a worthy one, and so they flaunt the law and reject the principles that govern the city. I bear these men and women no personal ill will. They are children of the Dark Queen just as we all are. However, I cannot allow them to sway this community—this city—from its chosen course. Anyone

who opposes or incites others to oppose the laws of the land will be dealt with firmly and swiftly.

We are all mortals, and therefore fallible. To fall from the path of righteousness is unfortunate but expected; to fail to recognize one's error and work immediately to correct it, however, is criminal. And this government will not allow such criminals to walk our streets and perform brazen crimes.

Lest anyone be uncertain as to whether his or her lapses have passed into the realm of criminal delinquency, I have ordered the City Guard to post on every street corner the statutes by which the city of Palanthas runs. I'm sure you will excuse me if I take a few moments to read them aloud for you today.



- ♣ All citizens must obtain identification papers from the nearest Knight Checkpoint and carry these papers with them whenever they leave their residence. Should you lose your papers, proceed immediately to the nearest Knight Checkpoint to report the loss and replace your papers. A levy of three steel pieces must be paid when the papers are issued. Noble residents must pay a luxury tariff of thirty steel pieces.
- ♣ Kender may not be citizens of Palanthis.
- ♣ All visitors must obtain temporary identification papers before entering the city of Palanthis. Knight Checkpoints can be found at the head of the Knight's High Road and every three blocks along the waterfront. These papers are valid for no more than one week, after which the visitor must apply for new papers. A levy of five steel pieces must be paid each time new papers are issued. Noble visitors must pay a luxury tariff of fifty steel pieces.
- ♣ Kender may not enter Palanthis unsupervised. In order to obtain identification papers, a kender must have one citizen or two nonkender visitors sponsor him or her. Sponsors of kender assume full legal and financial liability for any act committed by their charges.
- ♣ All citizens and visitors must make their papers available for inspection to Knights or City Guards at every gate through the Old City Wall, at checkpoints wherever they may exist, or whenever requested by a Palanthis city official.
- ♣ A midnight curfew exists throughout the city of Palanthis. Any person found on the streets after curfew will be arrested if in possession of valid identification papers, or may be put to death if without papers.
- ♣ Citizens and visitors are prohibited from doing the following: transporting into the city any magical, blessed, or enchanted item that can cause injury or damage; disguising the appearance or presence of themselves or others; affecting the mind, memory, or emotions of others; carrying any weapons beyond personal equipment required in the performance of one's job; and bringing into Palanthis any object deemed unique, dangerous, or legally restricted by an inspecting Knight.
- ♣ Attempts to prophesy, scry, or divine the future are strictly forbidden.
- ♣ Public gatherings of more than five individuals are forbidden without special permission from the local Knight Checkpoint. It is unlawful to address the public in the streets or within any business without a specific permit.
- ♣ Transgressions of these statutes are punishable by any or all of the following: imprisonment, pillory, hard labor, loss of citizenship, banishment, or execution.



Please remember that these strictures are absolute, and the penalties are mandatory. The rule of law is intended to guarantee the safety of the citizenry and the peace of the land. It cannot suffer exemptions.



Advice Overheard on the Waterfront

Ahoy!

Cast a line down here, mate, and I'll tie you off—there you go! Come ashore now, and enjoy the city with a heart of stone!

Would this be your first trip to Palanthis? I thought so. You had that look about you—drinking in the sights but unsure of where to go first. Well, have a seat on the sea wall there, and I'll give you a steel piece worth of advice. We tars have to look out for one another, you know.

My mother named me Shaun Driftwood, but my friends all call me "Copper," though you'd never guess why now that my hair's gone all gray. I was born and raised on this waterfront, sailed out as everything from a deckhand to a first mate on more ships than you can see anchored in this harbor, and I've been land locked these past ten years. I've seen the world and I've seen Palanthis, and let me tell you, neither one is what it used to be.

I remember a time when sailors were so eager to get into town that they'd leap from the decks as their ships pulled into the harbor and swim to shore. Mostly they'd disappear into the city, squander their pay on liquor that didn't burn on the way down and on women with skin as soft as goose down. They'd not be heard from again until the very hour that the ship was set to weigh anchor.

These days they still want to spend their money, but most of them come back to the ships every night. Between the curfew and the taxes on inn rooms, they can't afford to both drink and sleep in town.

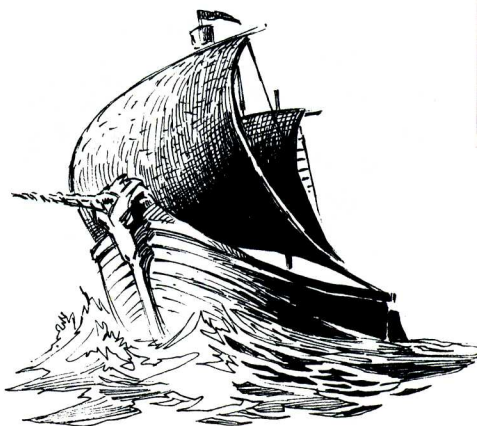
Oh, the taxes would kill this town for sure if there were anywhere else for the captains to sell their cargo. A hundred-ton ship'll lose nearly a quarter of her profit to the taxes. Thankfully she can more than make up for the loss on the return trip. It seems like folks would rather buy dwarven ham-

mers from Palanthis than from Thorbardin itself. Not that I'm complaining, mind you.

The taxes give you an idea what the Lord Knight and his men are all about, though. They take their profit off another man's work, then penalize him for not making more. A lot of the money they take goes to that big blue dragon Khellendros, though. Yep. Dragons and their hoards. The monster must have quite a load of steel by now, I'd guess. Sad to say, though, there's nowhere you can go in Palanthis to get away from the dragon's money gatherers. Those Dark Knights are everywhere.

Look over yonder. That's one of the Knight Checkpoints on the waterfront. Don't try to go into town without stopping there for your identification papers. Smile nice to the Knight and give him no trouble, and you'll be out of their sight as quick as can be. Open your gob or show any backbone, and they'll keep you there half the day—and charge you twice as much for the privilege. That's the secret to dealing with the Knights: Tell them how strong they are, and they'll bend over backward to help you. Tell them how strong *you* are and they'll break you in two.

Keep your wits about you as you walk through the marketplace. Don't stop to admire or, for Zeboim's sake, pick up something. These merchants see a lad or



lass straight off the boat and they go for the kill. It's not by accident that you can't get to the city without passing through the market. Wait a day or two, or at least 'til you've seen the sights, before you buy anything. You'll get a much better price if you're walking toward the piers than if you're coming from them.

Do you have any family in the city? No? Too bad. Remember, the people of Palanthis don't like you. In their eyes, if

you're not from Palanthis, you're just a bumpkin. They'll take all your money then spit you back out into the street.

But if you're somebody's brother or uncle or cousin, they'll take it easy on you. After all, they don't want someone else fleecing their kin. The best thing you can do is invent a relative—say, an

uncle who's an Aesthetic at the Library and say that you're in visiting him; give him a plain name like Kess or Tom. They may not believe you, but they won't be able to prove you're lying either—unless, of course, one of those book-minders happens to be in the place at the same time.

Now, you have to look out for more than one type of thief. The store owners will take your last coin, but the Thieves' Guild will take your purse, pocket, and pants as well. They're not such a problem for those of us who live here. I think the merchants have worked out a deal with them to keep their hands off money that's staying in the city, but if you're a visitor, particularly one who *looks* like he has money, then you'll have at least one guildmember following you at all times.

If you ask me, the best parts of town are the Old Temple District and the Tower of High Sorcery. Both the City Guard and the Dark Knights stay as far as they can from those places. The one is too high up on the hill, and the other is too frightening. If you can manage the walk or master your fear, the eateries and pubs in these sections will give you the closest taste of what it was like in Palanthis in the old days.

Once you've seen the famous buildings, stay away from the Central Plaza and the Temple of Paladine. That's where the Dark Knights usually find the most troublemakers, so more guards stand watch there, and they're quicker to anger. And if you've a brain in your head, don't even visit Nobles' Hill.

You won't find

anything to see, and the folks who live there are so scared someone's going to take their money that they're likely to release the dogs on you if you stare at their houses too long.

Well, that ought to do it. You're all set for a fun and exciting stay in Palanthis. Keep your wits about you or you'll end up face down, naked in the gutter—or worse.


Oh, yeah. One last thing.

Don't trust anyone. Everybody in Palanthis is looking out for himself, and nothing—I mean *nothing*—is for free.

That'll be one steel piece for the advice. Oh . . . and another copper for the sales tax—damned Dark Knights!



CHAPTER THREE



he was lost in a forest of marble. And the number of people! She saw more people in one minute in Palanthas than she'd seen during a lifetime . . . and all the people seemed to be in a tearing hurry, bustling and shoving and pushing and walking very fast, red-faced and out of breath.

—Usha arrives in Old City, Dragons of Summer Flame

The Old City is, in ways both symbolic and literal, the heart of Palanthas. Here you will find the city's spiritual center, its emotional outlet, and the pulse of its life blood.

My name is Bertrem. I am the nominal leader of the order of Aesthetics and, if you seek a guide to show you the sights and tell you the history of Palanthas, I can modestly say that you could do far worse than to walk a while with me. I have lived in Palanthas, if not my entire life, then at least for all the part that really matters. For more than fifty years I have been an Aesthetic, and that means my world revolves around the Great Library here in the Old City.

The Great Library of Palanthas

The Great Library is home to the order of Aesthetics and, so far as I know, the greatest repository of learning in all the world. It has been a fixture in Palanthas for longer than anyone can recall.

I do not mean this last sentence as a bit of impressive hyperbole—the fact is

that no one truly knows when the edifice was built. Though it is made from the same material as all the other buildings of Old City (white stone, dragged down from the Vingaard Mountains by the dwarf craftsmen who fashioned most of our buildings), I can find no record of anyone ordering, designing, or constructing its three massive wings and separate living quarters. Still, the mystery of the structure is nothing when compared to its master.

Though I am now head of my order, I will never be master of the Library. That honor will forever belong to my master, Astinus. Many rumors have been spread about my master—that he is the avatar of Gilean, for example—but very few people know the facts of his life.

As near as I can tell, he walked onto the face of Krynn the moment the Library was built. Astinus is gifted with an insight into the people and events of our world that is rivaled only by the bard known as the Herald. However, where the Herald's knowledge encompasses all of the world's past, my master saw all of her present. He spent nearly every waking hour of his centuries-long life writing down the history of Krynn as it was taking place, pausing only to see the most important of guests or to impart some vital bit of information to the Lord of Palanthas.

To help him in his work, Astinus founded the order of Aesthetics, a brotherhood of scholars sworn to observe and record the unbiased, unexpurgated truth about all the important events of the world. For all the miraculous things about my master, he could write only so quickly. While Astinus captured the overall tapestry of Krynnish history, his Aesthetics penned treatises providing deeper details on the people, places, and incidents described therein. He demanded fairness and neutrality in all things from his followers, telling us time and again that our purpose was to preserve so accurately a record that people of future gener-

Narrators and the Great Library

Heroes will find the public section of the Great Library open at all hours. They are free to enter and leave as they like; however, all the books must remain on the premises. Two or three Aesthetics are always on duty in the public wing, willing to help “loresseekers” (as they call those who visit the Library) find the particular books they are looking for.

The doors to both private wings and the living area remain locked at all times. Heroes who wish to speak with a particular member of the order (including Bertrem) must give a message to one of the Aesthetics in the public section, then wait while he or she seeks out the person in question. Most welcome visitors are invited into the Library’s gardens for private conversation. Only the most important and trusted visitors are invited into the private sections.

Unknown to the Aesthetics, the Lord Knight has assigned a Dark Knight to watch the Library every minute of the day. He does not want to be seen restricting access to the information contained within, but he certainly wants to know exactly who is availing him or herself of that information—and why. Heroes who visit the Great Library too often may find themselves followed or even harassed by the local authorities.

♣ **Bertrem, chief Aesthetic:** *Human elder male, dedicated demeanor, Adventurer, 8 ♣. Co 5, Ph 4, In 8, Es 7, Dmg 0 (unarmed), Def 0 (common clothing).*

Head of the order of Aesthetics, Bertrem can usually be found in the Library. He is a serious and somewhat stuffy academician who treats his studies as solemnly as a priest treats his order’s tracts. Having spent most of his adult life as the personal assistant to Astinus, Bertrem truly believes in the tenets of neutrality and painstaking accuracy that his former master embodied for so many centuries. His greatest ambition is to restore the Great Library’s collection to its former glory as the single greatest repository of information in all the known world.

Story Seeds

- ♣ During a quest, the heroes come across a leather-bound book with no outer marking other than the seal of the Great Library of Palanthas. Inside is a highly detailed account of the battle with Chaos that ends with the Second Cataclysm. After this last passage, the book is signed “Astinus of Palanthas.” Where did it come from? Is it a forgery? What will the Aesthetics say about it?
- ♣ As the heroes approach the Great Library, they see a pair of Dark Knights stationed before the door. If they try to enter, the Knights tell them that the Library has been closed by order of the Lord Knight. No one may enter and, likewise, no one may leave. As the heroes look at the building, they see sullen-eyed Aesthetics peering out several windows. Since the Lord Knight takes such careful steps to give the illusion that Palanthas is a free city, what dire circumstances have led him to take such harsh action?
- ♣ The Aesthetics hire the heroes to retrieve a book that was taken from the public section of the Library. It is an ordinary tome—a history of a Solamnian noble family, but the thief passed up valuable first-editions and killed one of the Aesthetics to get it. Who was the thief and why is this book so important to him or her?



ations could read it and then decide the truth of the matter on their own. "Tell the readers what to see and what to hear, but never tell them what to think."

Astinus was quite keenly aware that the unadulterated truth could be quite unpopular in many of the more politically sensitive quarters, throughout the world, and even within the city of Palanthas. For propriety's sake, and I think for his own peace of mind, he forbade any outsider to read his histories without his permission, locking them up in two tremendous wings of the complex. However, since the Library was a source of knowledge for all of the peoples of Ansalon, he filled the third wing with a collection of tomes and resources for the public to enjoy.

The morning after the forces of Good and Evil overcame the great Chaos God, we awoke to find Astinus gone. Not dead, mind you—completely vanished. This was the only moment in which, to my undying shame, I actually doubted the value of my devotion to my master

and to the order.

I did not, however, have time to wallow in this self-doubt, for the other Aesthetics, particularly the younger ones, turned to me for answers. Though I had only confusion in my mind, I found these words in my heart:

"Astinus has left us, if I do not miss my guess, to chronicle events so titanic that we mere mortals could not even hope to comprehend them. He does this, I am certain, with faith and confidence that we will continue his work here. Some day, I believe he will return to assess our performance in his absence. I, for one, will not allow my work to be found wanting. Now, who will chronicle this event for us?"

As every Aesthetic's hand shot into the air, I knew that the mantle of leadership had fallen onto my shoulders. It is a duty I take seriously, but at the same time, one that I look forward to passing back to my master upon his return.

For a time there was unrest within the brotherhood, as some of the more



ambitious members contended that Astinus would never return and began a struggle for power within the organization. This ended the morning that we

awoke to find nearly the entire contents of the private collections missing.

Every book that Astinus had ever penned, annotated, or even scribbled a

New Role: Aesthetic

The order of Aesthetics has been an ancient and revered part of Ansalonian culture for centuries. Members of the order have been present at practically every major event in recent history, observing and recording the proceedings with dispassionate accuracy. Players who enjoy the challenge of roleplaying heroes who are passionate about *observing* history rather than *making* it can create Aesthetic heroes and bring a measure of neutrality to their campaigns

Roleplaying

All members of the order of Aesthetics follow the teachings of Astinus. They are trained to carefully observe everything that goes on around them and record it with complete impartiality. Of course, being in the midst of history in the making, Aesthetic heroes occasionally find that circumstances force them to take a more active role than they would prefer. Members of the order are urged to follow their consciences as regards interfering with events they observe, and to always be aware that a deed done out of conscience serves history, while one performed out of desire taints it.

Requirements

Aesthetics receive intensive training to improve their powers of observation and memory. Heroes must have scores of 6 or higher and codes of "B" or "A" in Perception in order to take on this role. All this focus on perception and recall, though, leaves Aesthetics no time for other studies. Aesthetic heroes may therefore have no more than one "A" and one "B" code among the rest of their abilities, and may not have Reason or Spirit codes higher than "C." However, since they must read and write, they should have a minimum Reason score of 6.


Advantages

Because their entire lives are devoted to recording what they see and hear, Aesthetic heroes receive an automatic trump bonus to all actions to recall the smallest details of any event in which they or those around them took part.

Disadvantages

By the same token, since Aesthetics dispassionately report everything they see and hear, anyone engaged in surreptitious activities (from robbery to rebellion, freedom fighting to planning a surprise birthday party) shun them. After all, if someone asks an Aesthetic about a certain set of events, the Aesthetic will dispassionately relate these events, even if it places someone in a tight situation. In addition, many an Aesthetic has wound up in jail or worse simply because he or she was within sight of a clandestine meeting. This means that Aesthetics never receive a trump bonus when dealing with people.





notation in simply disappeared, in the same way our master himself did. The oddest thing is that although there were several Aesthetics working in the Library at the time, none of them noticed that books had disappeared until the rest of us rose in the morning.

This, of course, ended any arguments that Astinus was gone forever. After all, if he came back for his books (which we all assume he did), who knows when he will return again?

I find that I can no longer spend as much time scribing as I once did, for I have neither my master's gift of omniscience nor his ability to completely shut out the demands of the outside world. My time is split between mentoring the newer Aesthetics and advising all manner of politicians and nobles who come to the Library seeking knowledge.

At my behest, the members of our order have set about restocking the private wings of the Library. Our lord Astinus may carry his immense collection with him, but we mere students need reference volumes to work from. We have representatives visiting castles, keeps, and cities all over the map, searching for tomes of forgotten lore which they copy, then place on the vacated Library shelves. Others of us take time occasionally to write new volumes to fill gaps in the Library's collection. I myself recently worked with none other than Caramon Majere, Hero of the Lance, to prepare a text on Ansalonian fauna.

The public wing, thankfully, remains just as full as ever it was (my master rarely opened any of those volumes, let alone deigned to write in them). Folk who come to the Library will find as impressive a collection of texts as ever they have seen. And if they cannot find the volume they seek, one of our Aesthetics is familiar enough with the subject to offer them some manner of insight.

While I am nowhere near as reclusive as my master, I also allow only the most important of guests to visit the private collections. And no one, not even myself, is permitted to enter Astinus's study. We

leave that room exactly as our master did.

The Central Plaza

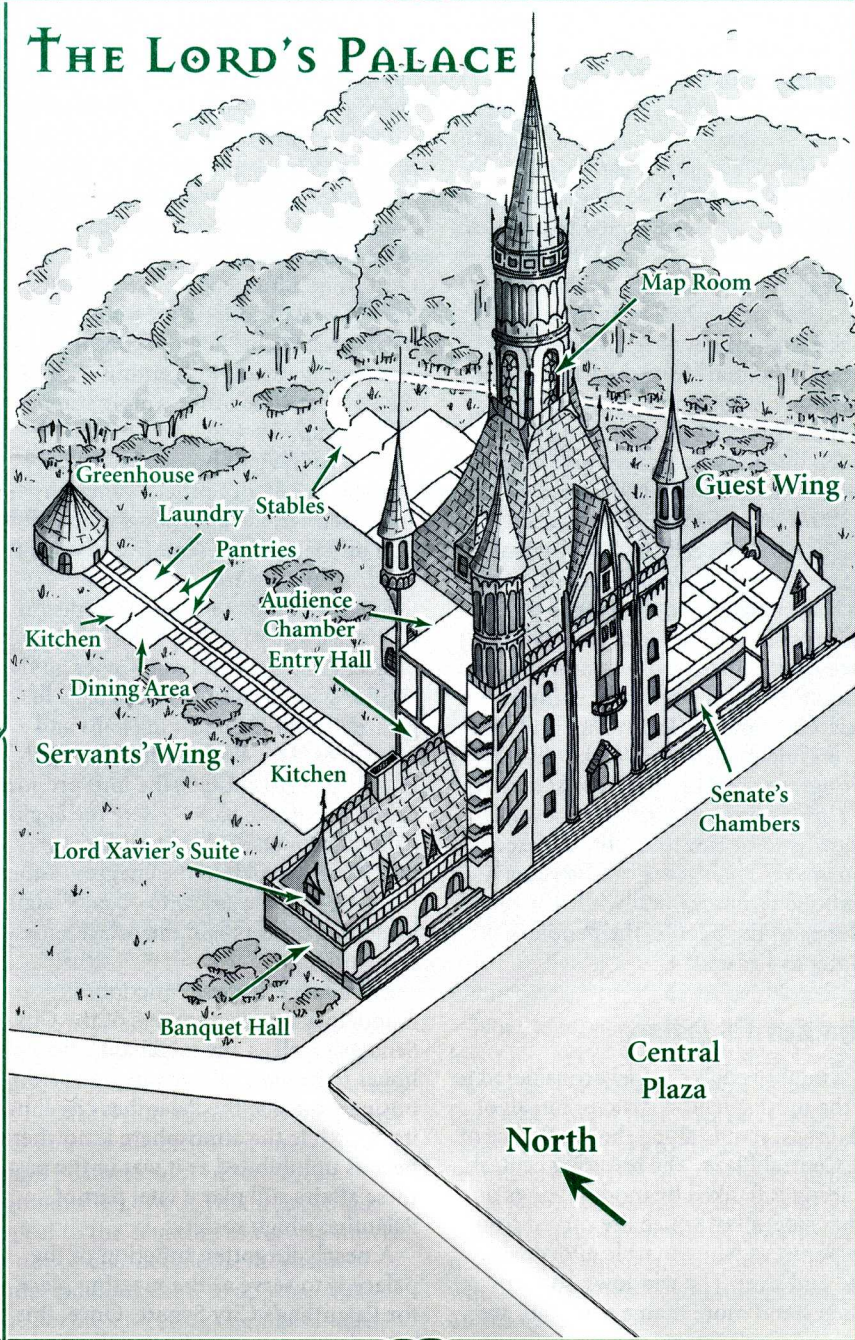
While the Great Library is the center of my world, this is by no means true for the rest of Palanthas's residents. No, the heart of the city and, in many ways, the heart of the culture is the Central Plaza.


Some might find this last statement a bit perplexing because, truth be told, the plaza itself is nothing more than a gigantic marble courtyard devoid of building

Central Plaza Story Seeds

- ✦ Rumors circulate that the Central Plaza is haunted by a ghost who chases off anyone who tarries there too long. The Lord Knight promises to do something about it, since some of his Knights of Takhisis possess skills in the mystic art of spiritualism. Some investigation by the heroes reveals that every time the ghost is seen, a disheveled old man can also be found somewhere in the vicinity. Is the ghost real? If not, is the mysterious man an agent of the governor—part of a scheme to dupe the people for some unknown purpose? Or is he an enemy of the Dark Knights, trying to ruin their reputation by dredging up the government's past abuses?
- ✦ The heroes come to Palanthas in order to meet someone (perhaps a Legionnaire or a dealer in magical contraband). However, they learn that their contact has been arrested and is due to be executed on the Central Plaza in half an hour. Can the heroes stage a rescue in the middle of a public execution? If they even try, the heroes go straight to the top of the Dark Knights' most wanted list.

THE LORD'S PALACE





or structure. However, the site offers a magnificent view of most of the major sites in Palanthas, and it is home to the only indigenous Palanthan lizard: a species of ginko known as pugs. From it you can see the Lord's Palace, the Great Library, the Temple of Paladine, and the recognizable rooftops of every quarter of the city. You can even see the treetops of the vile Shoikan Grove, and the glass-smooth waters of Branchala Bay.

During their initial occupation, the Dark Knights drove gigantic stakes through the marble of the Central Plaza, turning it into a great open stockade called the "Cage." Anyone who voiced dissent was sent there, often for weeks or months at a time. However, when he returned a year later, Lord Knight Kinsaid realized that this was one of the few diplomatic errors Lord Ariakan made, since the people of Palanthas knew the plaza as a gathering place for holidays and festivals. Instead of erecting a symbol of fear, Kinsaid declared a holiday, Peace Day, and had the marble plaza waxed and polished (though the marks of the old stakes yet marred its surface). Still, whenever a traitor is to be put to death, the execution always takes place on the plaza—a symbolic reminder that while the plaza belongs to the people, the people belong to Kinsaid.

The Lord's Palace

This mighty edifice, widely considered to be the most splendid structure in all of Palanthas, stands along the north face of the Central Plaza. The towering central building is flanked by modest wings on either side, all of which are carved from the purest of white marble gilded with gold and steel. The windows, some of which stand more than a story tall, are made of single panes, as pure as dwarven crystal.

A great row of stairs runs from the Central Plaza straight up to the palace. Once, the adoring public would sit on the steps, knowing that the Lord of

Palanthas would sometimes wander out onto one of the balconies and address the crowd below. This tradition, though, died with Lord Amothus, a great man and the Lord of Palanthas when the city fell to the Dark Knights. The new Lord, Xavier uth Nostran, though an excellent man, is more a figurehead than a politician, and he is never seen in public without a Dark Knight escort (usually the Lord Knight himself) and even then is not allowed to address the public extemporaneously. This had the effect of dampening the crowd's enthusiasm to the point at which they simply stopped showing up.

As Lord Xavier's home, the palace hosts all manner of official functions and meetings. Lord Xavier gives any foreign official or representative of one of the dragon overlords who travels through Palanthas a suite of rooms (as well as a cadre of bodyguards) in the palace. What's more, Lord Xavier holds regular state dinners and gala balls in the palace's magnificent dining halls and ballrooms. And every spring during the Peace Day celebrations, the lord presides over a debutante ball—where the eligible daughters of all the best families are introduced (much to the chagrin of their families, in some cases) to equally eligible young officers—in the palace's massive gardens.

Attendance at these functions is mandatory for all members of the City Senate as well as any merchant who hopes to be granted permission to do business outside the Palanthas city limits. So, while the atmosphere is nowhere near as uninhibited as it was in the past, these affairs still play a vital part of Palanthas's high society.

A nearly forgotten function of the palace is to serve as the meeting place for Palanthas's City Senate. Once, this organization practically ran the city; now it is nothing more than a sham perpetuated by the Lord Knight to give the merchants the illusion of self rule. Twenty-five of the fifty senators in the City Senate represent the most powerful

Narrators and the Lord's Palace

The members of the City Senate all come from the wealthiest of families. None of them have distinguished themselves enough to warrant an entry in this section; however, Narrators may wish to create one or more for a Palanthis-based campaign. They serve excellently as both sponsors and adversaries for heroes. Senators from noble houses may have connections to the Solamnian Knights, and those from merchant houses may have connections with the Thieves' Guild (though given the current political climate, neither side will be willing to admit these ties).

- ✦ **Xavier uth Nostran, Lord of Palanthis:** *Human elder male, just demeanor, Champion.* Co 5, Ph 6, In 6, Es 8, Dmg +6 (broad sword), Def -1 (padded silk).

Although the current Lord of Palanthis owes his position completely to the Dark Knights, he has no special love for them or their politics. After all, his office clearly holds less power than it did at any previous time in Palanthis's long history. Though he will do nothing to jeopardize his position, he is certainly willing to condone and even support insurrection through subterfuge and acts of omission.

Story Seeds

- ✦ A mishap during a summoning spell lands the heroes in the garden of the Lord's Palace. Guards are everywhere, searching for a would-be assassin who just attempted to kill Lord Xavier. Can the heroes get out alive? Or perhaps they'd like to go in and finish the job the assassin started.
- ✦ A hero is invited to speak before the City Senate (perhaps about some recent adventures the group has had). As the senior senator introduces the hero, he gasps in pain and pitches forward—dead! A dagger sticks out of the senator's back, and the hero is the only one who conceivably could have put it there. Who killed the senator, and why? What's more, can the other heroes clear their friend's name?

merchant houses, and twenty-five senators represent the noble Solamnian families. Before the current occupation, the Senate wrote all the laws for Palanthis and set the tariffs for merchants doing business with other cities. Though the Lord of Palanthis could appeal to the senators to reverse unwise or unpopular decisions, they were under no obligation to appease him. The Senate's meeting chambers were widely known as the loudest rooms in Palanthis—some claim that debates there grew so heated that captains guiding their ships into the Bay of Branchala could hear the senators before they could see the harbor lights.

Now, however, the City Senate is no less a puppet of Sir Kinsaid than Lord Xavier is. The Senate enacts the laws that the Dark Knight tells it to and grants caravan rights only to those whom the regime favors. The Senate makes no pretense about liking the situation, but the senators do not have the wherewithal to do anything about it. The only senator who ever tried was the first man hanged on the Central Plaza.

I, or one of my senior Aesthetics, am called to the Senate about once every year to record, for all posterity, that the institution is alive and well, and enacting legislation just as it always has. It seems important to the Lord Knight



that history sees his regime as one based on law and justice. While I do not personally approve of the current government, I must in all honesty say that this is true—though it is the law of the jungle and rough justice to be certain. However, it is not my place to judge the Lord Knight nor his men; I simply record what I see and go about my business until such time as I am summoned again.

Other Important Sites

When people talk about the Central Plaza, most people assume they mean either the plaza itself or the Lord's Palace. After all, the rest of the plaza is surrounded by ornate, but undistinguished buildings. The palace and plaza are places out of dreams—too beautiful to be part of an ordinary life. The other buildings, more mundane, are built for real people—not that many real people *want* to have anything to do with them.

City Guard Barracks

The western edge of the Central Plaza faces a long, low building whose facade is fluted and columned in a distinctly Ergothian style. While it may have the air and quiet dignity of a courthouse or library, this is in fact the barracks for the Palanthas City Guard.

In the past the guard consisted mostly of young warriors who lacked the noble lineage or patronage to be sponsored for squiring in the Solamnic Knights. The City Guard offered them a way to fight side-by-side with the Knights, as comrades, if not brothers, and dedicate their lives to protecting the innocent.

The Dark Knights, of course, disbanded the force after taking the city. However, they immediately reformed the Guard, filling its ranks with their own squires and mercenaries, and immediately began combing the ranks of Palanthians for able-bodied young people to indoctrinate.



Narrators and the Pillars of Justice

Throughout his career, Sir Grimgeitz has dedicated himself to the strictest adherence to the Dark Knights' Code and demanded the same from every Knight and civilian who ever served under him. As High Judge of Palanthas, Sir Grimgeitz rules on cases based solely on the letter of the law; to his mind, no conceivable set of circumstances warrants stepping outside the social boundaries of the city's statutes.

❖ **Sir Vickar Grimgeitz, High Judge of Palanthas:** *Human elder male, purposeful demeanor, Champion.* Co 3, Ph 5, In 7, Es 7, Dmg +3 (short sword), Def -7 (plate armor, kite shield).

Story Seeds

- ❖ A poor young man of the heroes' acquaintance (perhaps a young relative) is offered a commission in the Palanthas City Guard. Though he has no great love of the Dark Knights, this seems his only way to truly improve his lot in life (being an adventurer is just too risky). Can the heroes convince the lad not to sign on with the city's captors? If not, will the boy serve as a mole for the resistance efforts in Palanthas or a liability to the cause?
- ❖ At some point shortly after the heroes have struck a blow against the Dark Knight regime, a character of great importance (perhaps a leader of the underground resistance) is arrested and charged with crimes the heroes committed. If convicted, the character faces execution or, at best, life imprisonment. What will the heroes do? Can they save the character without sacrificing themselves?

Today, the City Guard is filled with young men and women who, while not dedicated body and soul to the cause of Knights of Takhisis, are certainly loyal to and quite used to taking orders from them. Their commanding officer is a Dark Knight, and their armor and shields bear the Dark Queen's insignia rather than the city's.


The Pillars of Justice

The eastern and southern faces of the Central Plaza look upon various buildings ranging in size from modest single-family dwellings to tremendous structures that obviously house governmental offices. Two of the buildings nestled on these sides hold great importance to the Palanthas government. Though there is nothing particularly noteworthy about the appearance of these structures, even the most casual observer will notice that Palanthians give them an exceptionally wide berth.

The building to the east is the Palanthas Courthouse. Once a symbol of justice and order, the Courthouse now represents the ironclad grip the Dark Knights have on the city. Infractions of even the most superfluous law warrant the perpetrator being manacled and dragged up the Courthouse stairs. Inside sits only one judge, Sir Vickar Grimgeitz, who hears every case and passes summary judgment.

Now, to be fair, Sir Grimgeitz is most concerned with the rule of law. Should you have the misfortune to come before his bench, though, you'll find that his love of the law completely overshadows even his sense of commitment to the Knighthood. He has not one ounce of compassion for those who break the law—even in the most mitigating of circumstances. Add to this the fact that the Dark Knight government has seen fit to issue mandatory penalties of a year or more of hard labor for nearly every





offense, and you'll see why this slight, brooding old Knight is among the most feared men in all of Palanthas.

Those whom Sir Grimgeitz judges guilty immediately find themselves dragged out of the Courthouse, across the courtyard, and through the doors of the building on the plaza's southern face—the Palanthas City Jail. While kender the continent over reportedly speak in glowing terms about the jail (particularly as concerns the meals), from my few experiences there—interviewing prisoners, rather than as a guest myself—I would say that either kender have poorly refined palates or the Knights of Takhisis devote considerably fewer resources to cuisine than the Solamnians once did. Watery treacle was the staple of every meal I've seen served in the jail in recent years. And while a kender would certainly be fascinated by the number and variety of prisoners one would meet there, most others would call the jail sorely overcrowded. I've known strong warriors who came out broken shadows of their former selves after only a six-month stay in the jail.

Nobles' Hill

The Central Plaza lies not only at the city's heart, but also at its base; by this I mean that it rests at the point from which the city streets begin their rise into the surrounding hills and mountains. Look from the plaza and you can see practically all the neighborhoods of Palanthas, and none is more breathtaking than Nobles' Hill.

The hill rises directly behind the City Guard Barracks, after two blocks of governmental buildings that act almost as a border between the world of common criminals in the jail and the homes of the oldest and most powerful Palanthian families. When gazing at the sheltered polished marble facades, one can have no doubt that the ladies and gentlemen who reside here are rich beyond the ken of most folk, but it takes more than

money to live in this neighborhood—it takes history.

Laborers constructed most of the buildings here at the same time as the city itself rose into being. The elegant structures were built to the exact specifications of the great grandchildren of Palanthas's founders, whose direct—if distant—descendants live there to this day. In all of recorded history (and with Astinus having been a Palanthas resident, that record is continuous) not a single yard of property in the Old City section of Nobles' Hill has ever been sold off. This is the heart of Palanthian high society, and unlike other sections of Palanthas, the most prestigious homes stand majestically at the hill's bottom.

While the term Nobles' Hill refers to all the residential districts in the city's northeast quadrant, people consider the original section of houses the finest place to live. Though citizens higher up on the mountain have a better view of the city, they dream of owning a more prestigious lower-elevated residence the same way a condemned man dreams of walking in an open field—a simple dream that has no chance of ever coming true. Simply owning property in the neighborhood entitles one to a seat on the City Senate.

Some say, and rightly so, that the residents of Nobles' Hill have grown completely out of touch with the lives of the rest of the populace over the last hundreds of years. Even the fall of Palanthas affected their privileged lives very insignificantly. The Dark Knights' ordinances and military presence mean little to people who practically never leave the confines of their affluent community. While most families here own properties higher on the hill (as well as in other cities across the continent), which they may inhabit during the warmest months of the year, the heart of their society is this small section of the Old City.

The estates here are all hidden behind towering walls and gardens that are, in places, as thick as the Shoikan Grove. Most of the common folk of Palanthas

haven't the faintest idea what anything (other than the rooftops) looks like, though if you linger outside a gate, you might get a distant view of the front of the house. Many avaricious merchants with ambitions to build financial empires draw inspiration by walking down these streets, imagining incorrectly that when they make their fortunes they will be welcomed guests in these fine homes.

The sad fact is that the people of Nobles' Hill never accept anyone who is not already one of their peers as anything other than an upstart or a servant.

The Knight's House

In all of Nobles' Hill, only one building is open to the general public—the



Knight's House. Traditionally, this housed Palanthis's Lord Knight, the

Solamnic Knight commanding the forces at the High Clerist's Tower. Under the new government, though, it houses Sir Elstone Kinsaid, the Lord Knight of Palanthis.

Unlike the other properties in this area, the Knight's House has neither wall nor gate protecting the

grounds. Rather, an inviting lawn dotted with small shade trees runs up to the house. The house itself is plain and quite modest by the local standards, but it stands two stories tall and has no fewer than twelve bedrooms.

As Lord Knight, Sir Kinsaid ostensibly acts as advisor to Lord Xavier, but the truth is that the Dark Knight holds all the reins of power. He must balance his duties to Mirielle Abrena (his comman-

Narrators and the Knight's House


Besides being one of the highest ranking Knights in the Order of the Lily, Sir Elstone Kinsaid is a consummate politician. He instinctively knows when to use the power of his office to intimidate a petitioner and when to smile and glad-hand his way to a solution. Through it all, though, he is ruthlessly goal-oriented and does whatever is necessary to advance his status. In recent years this has centered around maintaining Palanthis's place as the premiere trading port in Ansalon.

- ♣ **Sir Elstone Kinsaid, Lord Knight of Palanthis:** *Human adult male, decisive demeanor, Adventurer.* Co 7, Ph 8, In 6, Es 8, Dmg +9 (great sword), Def -5 (plate armor).

Story Seed

- ♣ The Lord Knight has not been seen in public for three weeks. Rather he has sequestered himself in the Knight's House and barred the general public from the grounds (something that has never happened before). All day and night Knights, scholars, sorcerers, and mystics of every description come and go. What is going on?





der in chief), Skie (the Blue Overlord who rules all the land surrounding the city), and the people of Palanthis—particularly the merchants (who keep the city an integral part of Ansalonian culture). Sir Kinsaid understands that, should the city's value as a center of trade dry up, his life may very well be forfeit.

While any citizen is still free to approach the Knight's House, very few do so anymore. Rumors abound that the Lord Knight invites single-minded politicians and businessmen who refuse to support his plans to the house—but the guests never return.

Most Palanthisians will tell you that the seat of government is in the Lord's Palace, since that place provides the headquarters for both Lord Xavier and the City Senate. However, anyone who has had even the most fleeting of dealings with the current administration knows that every decision of any import to the city occurs in the sitting rooms of the Knights' House.

The Palanthis Trade Exchange

It is helpful, when considering the odd juxtaposition of neighborhoods in the Old City, to remember that for hundreds of years this was all there was to the city of Palanthis (more correctly, I suppose, the city of Bright Horizon). Everything had to be squeezed within the tiny circle of land within the City Walls. As you walk north along the guarded estates of Nobles' Hill, you will suddenly round a corner and find yourself on the edge of a vast sea of commercial enterprises—the Palanthis Trade Exchange.

Filling almost the entire north quadrant of the Old City, the Exchange houses merchants, traders, restaurateurs, con artists, pick-pockets, and the greatest array of merchandise on the continent. Every trade route makes its way to Palanthis sooner or later (usually sooner), and any wares that enter the city can be

found for sale in the Trade Exchange. Here you'll find clothing, weapons, food, and jewelry from every port in Ansalon. What's more, you'll also find items from places that most folk can never visit: weapons forged in the sealed caverns of Thorbardin, garments spun from Silvanesti silk, and curios so bizarre that one is hard pressed to associate them with *any* known culture.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the merchandise for sale at the Exchange is how little of it actually comes from Palanthis. The city, being so terribly isolated, lacks the raw material to support any large-scale manufacturing concerns. Without the supplies sold here, Palanthis could not support half of its population.

This sprawling marketplace is most people's introduction to Palanthis. Anyone disembarking from a ship in the harbor will have a difficult time finding a way into the city that doesn't lead through at least five blocks worth of shops, stalls, and wagons. Some of these are permanent storefronts, while others come and go daily. A shop that sells fish one day can be a perfumery the next day, and a jeweler's the day after that. Frequent visitors to the Trade Exchange know to buy anything they *really* need the minute they find it; the item (not to mention the store itself) may not be there later.

Some consistency can be found among this ever-changing, cacophonous, commercial spectacle, though. A few shops have survived long enough to become landmarks that shoppers use to navigate the crowded streets in the same way that sailors use the stars to find their ways home.

Here and There

There is no dearth of cartographer's shops in Palanthis, which one should not find surprising for a city that is completely reliant on the sea for her survival. Of all these shops, though, the best is a rickety shack that overlooks the water-

Personalities of the Palanthas Trade Exchange

Narrators can add a lot of color to their campaigns by making use of the following characters. They can even serve as plot points in an adventure.

Wes Songline has devoted his entire existence to making exquisite maps. Over the years, he's had partners and apprentices, but they all left eventually. Now, in his golden years, he is saddened to think that his art will die with him. Wes is a lonely old man, and he gladly talks to anyone who enters his shop. He buys any rare or unusual map the heroes have and can be an invaluable source of geographic and historic knowledge both common and arcane.

§ **Wes Songline:** *Human elder male, methodical demeanor, Adventurer.* Co 5, Ph 3, In 6, Es 6, Dmg +2 (dagger), Def 0 (common clothing).

"Trader" Puff Keeneye is a rare kender—one consumed by a single passion: to find an object that embodies perfection. He's seen perfection before—in the form of a snowflake or a rose bloom—but it has always slipped quickly away. Puff wants to find perfection, hold it, and stare at it for a while.

Puff can be an extremely useful tool in a Narrator's cast of characters. Anything the heroes need, the kender might have. It is up to the heroes to find something Puff will find worthy of a trade.

§ **"Trader" Puff Keeneye:** *True kender adult male, impulsive demeanor, Novice.* Co 8, Ph 4, In 7, Es 6, Dmg varies (by weapon), Def 0 (common clothing).

Whatever her given name was, this Ergothian woman of about forty years is now known only as One-Eyed Kate. Like the original Kate, she is a Knight of the Lily in disguise. She serves both as a spy and a liaison for the Lord Knight's office by keeping Sir Kinsaid in touch with the less savory elements of the city. Members of the Thieves' Guild and the City Guard respect Kate, but neither trust her.

§ **One-Eyed Kate:** *Human adult female, tough demeanor, Champion.* Co 7, Ph 8, In 6, Es 4, Dmg +7 (billhook), Def -2 (leather).

Laslo Reaver fancies himself to be a tough character. During his first year there, he was expelled from the Academy of Sorcery for repeatedly brawling with fellow students. Though he has great magical promise, all he took away with him was a basic knowledge of enchantment. He uses this skill to magically enhance the blades he sharpens. The more a client pays, the more powerful (and longer lasting) the spell he casts. Although he's making a fine living, what Laslo wants most in the world is to be rich enough to buy a mansion on Nobles' Hill, and so he saves every coin he earns.

§ **Laslo Reaver:** *Half-elf adult male, scheming demeanor, Novice.* Co 8, Ph 5, In 7 (49), Es 4, Dmg +1 (stiletto), Def -3 (chain armor), also sorcery (enchantment).





front. A weather-worn, hand-painted sign reading “Here and There, maps for land and sea” hangs over the doorway.

Despite this coarse, bucolic facade, Here and There is reputed to be the finest cartographer’s shop in Palanthas, indeed perhaps in all of Ansalon. Beautifully rendered maps that are phenomenally accurate cover every flat surface in the building—the walls, tables, and even the ceiling. We at the Great Library came to Here and There to replace the atlases lost when Astinus took back his collection.

Although the owner, an elderly mapmaker named Wes Songline, has devoted his entire life to creating maps that are as much pieces of art as they are navigational tools, he has spent his entire life within the city of Palanthas; few people have ever even seen him venture outside Old Town. Still, Wes has an incredible amount of information at his beck and call; he remembers the precise location of every city, site, or phenomenon he has

ever mapped. Since he has made or copied charts of nearly every inch of Ansalon (as well as such fabled places as the Dragon Isles, Taladas, and even Istar), Wes is a font of information that can be found in no other single source.

The Labyrinth

Near the grounds of the Temple of Palanthas sits a large, open square devoid of even a single permanent structure. Each day, hundreds of vendors flock to this square, some pitching tents, others pulling carts, and still others simply spreading blankets out from which to sell their wares. They arrange themselves in a twisting network of rows, islands, and cul de sacs—a veritable maze of commerce—in which you can very quickly become hopelessly lost. Because of this mazelike quality, the area has come to be known as the Labyrinth.

The vendors set up shop on any open patch of ground, with no rule other than

“squatter’s rights” governing who goes where. Some come every day, others twice a month, and some appear once and are never heard from again. As a result, the Labyrinth changes daily, its alleys and avenues never falling in exactly the same pattern twice. At the day’s end, the vendors pack everything up and go home, leaving the square deserted until the next morning.

You never know what you’ll find for sale in the Labyrinth, and you never know who will be selling it. Apocryphal stories tell of a city senator who, after running up gambling debts, came to the Labyrinth to sell his seat in the government. You can find the most interesting items, however, at Puff’s Trading Post. Oddly enough, this is literally a wooden post on which sits a stocky, red-haired kender named Puff.

Puff is not interested in selling anything; he wants to trade. Despite the fact that the City Guard wants to arrest him and send him out of the city (because he is an unescorted kender), Puff arrives each day carrying his post and a satchel bearing ten or so items. The items differ every day and can include anything from a threadbare tunic to a solid steel sculpture or even a powerful magical artifact. No one knows where Puff gets these things, though rumors persist that the kender has a tremendous treasury hidden in the city’s sewer system. Rather than sell the items, Puff instead wants to trade them. Regardless of an object’s market value, the kender will cheerfully trade it for something of roughly equal size and weight—as long as it is interesting. He might trade a gold coin for a polished sliver of shale stone, or an ancient sword for an artfully carved broom handle. Once he makes a trade, the kender sits and stares at his new possession, oblivious to the world until another barterer comes his way. After all his old items have been exchanged for new ones, Puff gathers up his booty, uproots his post, and walks off to his secret home to study his treasures and pick new ones for trade the following day.

One-Eyed Kate’s

Fish is the one thing brought into Palanthas by the Palanthians themselves, rather than being made and imported by outsiders. One can go just about anywhere in the city and find a shop at which to buy fresh fish, but none as large nor featuring as wide a variety as One-Eyed Kate’s Fish Market. The only sign announcing the market within the tremendous warehouse is a placard bearing a painting of a yellow fish wearing an eye patch.

From mid-morning until close to sundown, the market is filled with wheelbarrows full of fresh cod, snapper, and perch, as well as more exotic animals like eels and squid.

The market’s namesake was a woman whose back was as strong as her will. She wore a black eye patch which, rumor says, she earned fighting in the War of the Lance (though for which side no one is certain). Kate ran her fish market from the time of the reconstruction following the Blue Lady’s War until she died, a few short years after the Second Cataclysm.

Strangely, a few months later another woman calling herself One-Eyed Kate took over the establishment. This new Kate, an Ergothian woman with broad muscles, standing well over six-feet tall, and also wearing an eye patch (though over the left eye rather than the right), has been there ever since. Clearly, the market is connected to some perfidious organization, but it does not behoove one to discuss such things openly.

The Whetstone

Though the Dark Knights have made it illegal to own or sell swords and other weapons of war, any number of shops from which you may purchase knives, scissors, and other bladed instruments still exist. Though I personally know of no such place, I’m told that if you ask the right people, you can still find stores that deal in contraband weapons. Whether the blade is on a sword, scissors, or letter opener, though, everyone in Old City





brings it to the Whetstone when it needs sharpening.

Run by a disreputable fellow named Laslo Reaver, who was expelled from the Academy of Sorcery in Solace under mysterious circumstances, the Whetstone has a sign that declares that “your blades will cut better than when they were new”—and apparently it’s true. I myself had a pair of scissors that, after being sharpened by Laslo, managed to cut through two hundred pages of text *and* a leather cover. Somehow, though, a few days later, the blades were as dull as they had been before.

It seems clear that Laslo is using some

trick he learned in his days as a sorcerer. Still and all, though, if you need a blade only to do a specific, difficult job, his fleeting effects may be worth his ridiculous fees.

The Temple of Paladine

In a city of ancient structures, the Temple of Paladine stands out only because its construction took place shortly after the War of the Lance; that it is among the most beautiful and serene places in Palanthis only increases its distinction.

Narrators and the Temple of Paladine

The Temple of Palanthis can serve as a place of refuge for the heroes. The priests offer comfort and aid to any deserving individual and are willing to risk arrest and even execution in order to help those who work in the name of Good.

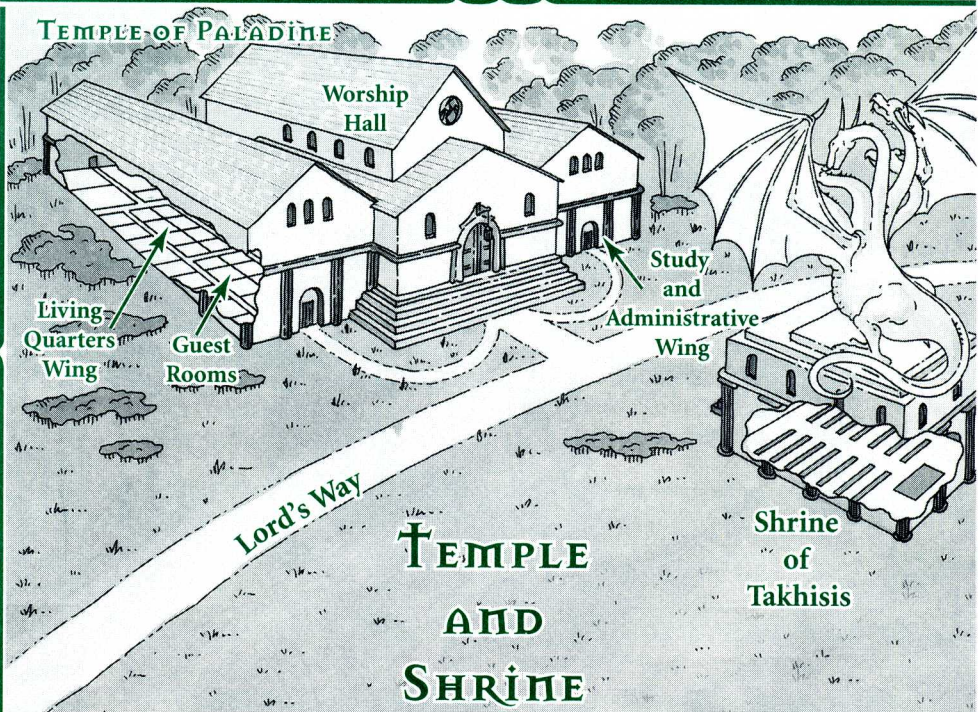
✦ **Matis Firstson, Revered Son:** *Human adult male, inspiring demeanor, Champion.* Co 6, Ph 6, In 7, Es 9 (81), Dmg 0 (unarmed), Def 0 (common clothing), also mysticism (channeling, healing, and sensitivity).

Orphaned in the Blue Lady’s War and raised at the Temple of Paladine, Matis surprised no one when he chose to enter the priesthood. Now more than fifty years old, Matis regrets nothing in his life. He has met the likes of Fizban the Fabulous and opposed the forces of both Evil and Chaos with a calm, purposeful demeanor that inspires not only his fellow priests, but also anyone else who meets him. Hand picked by Crysania to succeed her as head of the Temple, Matis uses all the resources at his command to ease the suffering of the people of Palanthis.

Story Seeds

- ✦ Recently the Temple has come under attack by skeletons, zombies, and other Evil undead creatures. No one knows where they come from or why, but each night they attack in greater and greater force. Soon they will threaten to overrun the complex and kill all the priests. Some claim the Lord Knight has ordered a Knight of the Skull to use necromancy to attack the priests. Others believe that the spirits of the pious are offended that the priests are doing nothing about the fact that Paladine’s city has fallen under the sway of Evil’s minions. Can the heroes find the cause of these attacks and bring them to an end?
- ✦ The Dark Knight guards stationed at the site have been ordered to prevent the heroes from entering the Temple building. All other worshipers and priests may come and go as they wish, and none of them report anything amiss in the holy place. Why are only the heroes barred from the building, and what will happen if they find a way to get past the Knights?





The Temple itself is a simple, unpretentious building made of plain white marble that the priests keep spotlessly clean. Inside is a large worship hall with a gray marble floor where the priests and acolytes meditate, attend to worshippers' needs, and devote themselves to serving the Platinum Father. Though the gods have retired from Kryn, these pious folk are bound and determined to remain true to Paladine's teachings and to keep the faith alive here in the city that bears his name. After all, the gods "left" Kryn once before; in the final analysis, the priests say, the gods are eternal and should be revered whether they walk the world or remain in their celestial homes.

The main Temple also holds a wing of small, sparsely furnished cells that the priests call home, as well as an administrative wing, where visiting dignitaries are received in one of several libraries and elegant meditation chambers. Here one can find carved friezes and also

shrines dedicated to the other gods of Good, particularly Paladine's twin sons, Kiri-Jolith and Habbakuk. Underneath the main floor are echoing basements that contain cold storage areas and several crypts. One of the vaults within the crypts contains the remains of Elistan, the Revered Son who found his faith in the true gods during the War of the Lance.

Everywhere you look on the Temple grounds are places that fairly call out for you to sit quietly under a tree, or by a fountain, or simply on the grass, and contemplate the Good within us all. It is a tribute to the architect and, of course, to the power of Paladine himself that this serenity remains undisturbed by the constant presence of Dark Knights (whose job it is to report back on exactly who visits the site) on the Temple's steps. They never prevent anyone from worshipping, though the looks they give visitors are enough to frighten away any worshippers whose faith falters even the

New Role: Priest of Paladine

Heroes for centuries have devoted their lives to Paladine and gone into the world to do Good in his name. The gods have retired from the world, so the devoted have fewer tangible rewards for their faith. Paladine can no longer reward his earnest followers with spells and abilities, yet a great number of fighters in the world still claim the mantle of paladin, and every temple is filled with priests and acolytes. Belief is a powerful weapon that can never be shattered or taken away.

Narrators should note that this role is a variation of the true believer role presented in *Heroes of Hope*. A Narrator can choose whether she wants to use the additional requirements presented here or use the more general true believer role in her campaign.

Roleplaying

Priests of Paladine protect and promote the welfare of all living things and live by a code of conduct that exemplifies the principles of Good. They preach the rejection of greed and the acceptance of mercy, and strive to make the world a better place. These priests eschew worldly goods and give all their surplus money and materials to the needy.

Requirements

In order to take on this role, a hero must have a minimum Spirit score of 6 and code of “D,” plus a nature drawn from a card with a white aura. Furthermore, a priest may not have a Reason code higher than “C.” Priests with skills in mysticism may choose *only* from the spheres of channeling, healing, sensitivity, or spiritualism.

Advantages

Priests of Paladine are warmly welcomed nearly everywhere (except in the camps of worshipers of Evil). They often get meals, lodging, and other necessities for free, though these are rarely any better than average quality. Also, priests can always convince Knights of Solamnia to aid them in their quests *if* they succeed in an *average Presence (Spirit)* action.

Disadvantages

Priests of Paladine may never receive a trump bonus for Presence actions when dealing with anyone who worships a Neutral or Evil god. In fact, at the Narrator’s discretion, a priest may receive anywhere from a –1 to –6 point penalty to such actions depending on the fanaticism of the other party involved.


tiniest bit. Though Revered Son Matis has complained repeatedly to the Lord Knight, the guards remain stationed at the Temple.

“I suppose I should be thankful that they haven’t torn the Temple down brick by brick,” Matis confided to me once.

“After all, Paladine *is* the immortal enemy of their Dark Queen. I suppose they realize that losing this place would affect civilian morale badly—though I’m certain the Temple galls them unceasingly.”

Why, I asked Matis, do you stay here when a regime so violently opposed to





your order runs the entire city? Even Revered Daughter Crysania left to establish a new holy refuge on the Isle of Sanctus, though she visits frequently. What keeps you and your priests here?

“Where are we needed more than here? We support the people in their hour of despair and do what we can to keep the minions of Evil from sapping our collective strength. Crysania no

more ran away from this city than she gave up her faith. No, the Revered Daughter left our Temple in order to pursue a greater cause in Paladine’s name. She returns here from time to time, and I must say that the courage she shows on these visits does wonders for the morale of our newer initiates.”

In the past, I pointed out, the priests of the Temple cured the sick and offered

Narrators and the Shrine of Takhisis

The Shrine of Takhisis stands as a symbol to all the people of Palanthas, and Narrators should use it in just this fashion in their campaigns. Even though the site is dedicated to the most Evil of deities, the Shrine is nothing more or less than a house of worship. The Dark Knights go there only to pray to their goddess and leave their scheming for more inconspicuous locations. Heroes who assault the Shrine without clear, public provocation will be branded vandals and bigots—and rightly so. That the Shrine’s location is intended as an insult to the worshipers of Good does nothing to change the fact that the city of Palanthas has a long-standing tradition of accepting all faiths and creeds within her borders.

☞ **Sir Trent Blackdash, a Knight of the Skull:** *Human adult male, clever demeanor, Champion.* Co 6, Ph 6, In 8, Es 10 (100), Dmg +7 (mitre of distinction), Def –7 (plate armor, kite shield), also mysticism (healing, mentalism, and necromancy).

Trent Blackdash is a relatively young man to have risen so high in the ranks of the Order. At thirty-two years of age he ranks among the highest Skull Knights in all of western Ansalon. Even Blackdash’s troops look upon him with a sense of awe and fear, because not one among them has any idea of what he did to earn his position. Rumors fly about his having defeated the Lord Adjudicator (head of the Skull Knights) in single battle, or that the magical mitre he always carries with him was a gift from Takhisis herself. He is obsessed with the Temple of Paladine, and hopes one day to see it burned to the ground and have the city renamed in honor of the Dark Queen. Meanwhile, he spins his plots and bides his time.

Story Seed

☞ The priests at the Temple of Paladine are up in arms because the shadow of the Shrine of Takhisis is moving. By the end of a cycle of the moon they find that the statue’s shadow has elongated in a manner to bring itself a foot closer to the Temple and has taken on a more sinister posture, though the statue itself hasn’t moved. Sir Blackdash claims to have no part in this and calls it the divine will of the Dark Queen reaching out to smite her eternal foe. If nothing is done, the statue’s shadow will reach the Temple in about two weeks. Can the heroes figure out what is happening and stop it before the shadow touches the Temple?

to bestow Paladine's blessings on anyone willing to accept them. With the gods gone, I asked, what do the priests actually *do* for anyone these days?

"We do almost exactly the same things we did during the years that Paladine walked the world.

Our priests come to us from many backgrounds. Some are skilled healers, others cooks or tailors. Each of us does what he or she can to make life easier for the worshipers who visit the Temple. But the main thing we do is offer hope to a people living in a seemingly hopeless world."

The Dark Queen's Shrine

Though the Temple of Paladine was too important to the citizens for Lord Knight Kinsaid to even consider razing it, he felt that it was important to do something to honor his mistress the Dark Queen for his troops' victory. Rather than despoil Paladine's shrine, Kinsaid decided he would build a tribute to Takhisis that dwarfed the existing Temple.

Construction crews worked day and night for nearly a year to build the Dark Queen's Shrine on the far end of the Temple of Paladine's main lawn. A gigantic brass statue of Takhisis, in her five-headed dragon form, towers over the compound and, as the day wears on, its shadow defies the movement of the sun and looms darkly toward the Temple until nightfall engulfs the complex in darkness—a symbolic display that is lost on no one.

Behind the statue is a large, austere hall, carved from black granite, that serves as the Temple of Takhisis. Most of the Dark Knights stationed in Palanthas come here at least once a week to offer prayers to their goddess. The

hall holds only several rows of uncomfortable benches and a brazier in which to burn offerings.

At first, the only worshipers who regularly visited the Shrine were the Dark Knights, but merchants and politicians


in the midst of petitioning

the Lord Knight for a personal boon often find that one price of such favors is a series of weekly offerings to the goddess. Sir Trent Blackdash, the master of this Shrine, always arranges a great ballyhoo to draw attention to these men and women putting principles aside to worship the Dark Queen for a mere dollop of worldly success. The result is a tremendous increase in sincere Takhisis worship among young Palanthians and anyone with political aspirations.

Two Dark Knights stand guard at the Shrine doors. Although no hard evidence supports this claim, urban legend holds that their job is to always be prepared to lay siege to the Temple of Paladine. Should the Knights stationed across the lawn give a special signal, the theory goes, these Knights will charge to the Temple and lay waste to every priest and acolyte in the place, not to mention any worshiper who shows even the least resistance.

While Sir Trent Blackdash, a Knight of the Skull, spends most of his days in the Shrine (or, more correctly, standing in the Shrine's doorway gazing hatefully





across the lawn at Temple of Paladine), he maintains a room in the Knight's House, where he goes each evening to report on goings on in the district. After the taking of Palanthas, he was immediately put in charge of raising the Shrine of Takhisis and has served as High Priest since its completion. Rumors say that he uses the Lord Knight's political enemies for bizarre experiments in spellcasting, and that the Shrine's guards are really zombies brought back to life through Sir Blackdash's efforts. Due to the fact that I have, on an uncomfortably high number of occasions, been required to visit the Shrine, I can attest that at least the last part of these rumors is completely false—the guards are living Knights.

Neighboring Sites

The blocks between the Temple of Paladine and the City Wall are mostly residential. Though you'll find many restaurants, art galleries, and shops specializing in religious paraphernalia, housing is the number one source of income in this neighborhood (and second only to commercial trade for the city as a whole). The vast majority of Palanthians live within Old City, either in rooms above shops or in one of the numerous boarding houses scattered about town.

Mrs. Trundle's Gnomish Inn

I suppose I could spend the entire day telling you about the various accommodations available in the Temple vicinity, but there would be no point. All the boarding houses, inns, and lodges are interchangeable—all, that is, except for Mrs. Trundle's Gnomish Inn.

Gretta Trundle (short for Gretta-wholeftherhometorunaninn, though I understand that this is a shorter version of her full name, as well) and her late husband Guntaar noticed that all the rooms in Palanthas were built for humans or, at best, elves, and could be

quite inconvenient for the less lanky races. So they built an inn designed for the more diminutive peoples. Humans and elves are welcome, of course, but they will likely find their feet hang far over the edge of the beds, and they will keep hitting their heads on the ceilings. The inn has the advantage, though, of being one at which most folk will never think of looking for you should you be trying to stay out of sight.

Sacred Objects

It has become more difficult, now that the gods have retired, to find a shop that sells religious paraphernalia. There is almost no call for symbols of the gods, books of arcane lore, and blessed or holy items any more and with excellent reason: These objects hold no more power than a stick or rock except when it comes to undead creatures and the like. Not many people wish to seek out the undead and kill them, so mostly adventuring souls and priests visit the store nowadays.

A very strange man, with haunted eyes and a nervous expression, runs a store that carries these things. He tells no one his name but will gladly sell you what he claims to be holy water, blessed scrolls, and religious symbols cast from every common and precious metal. I make no vouch for the efficacy of his wares.

A Taste of Silvanost

You'll find all manner of restaurants near the Temple, every type of cuisine from barbarian to Istaran (the recipes come from a cookbook of questionable authenticity, which can be found in the public wing of the Great Library). One, however, stands out above the rest not only for the food, but for the company of its owner.

A Taste of Silvanost serves authentic Silvanesti dishes (mostly vegetarian fair with one or two venison dishes thrown in for good measure) but never takes more than one dining party at a time.

The owner, an ancient elf named Solamna Farseer, follows an ancient family tradition of entertaining her guests with stories while they eat. The best part is that all the tales are true.

Solamna is the granddaughter of an elf marooned in Bright Horizon by Captain Firebrand in the year 1932PC. She herself is elderly for an elf and has spent most of her life in this restaurant (which her

grandfather opened the day the city was renamed Palanthas). Following the custom, she will tell any tale she knows at a guest's request. In the days since Astinus took back his collection, I myself have bought a meal or two at this fine establishment for the express purpose of asking Solamna about events of historical import.

Personalities Around the Temple of Paladine

The following characters can be found throughout the area around the Temple of Paladine.

Mrs. Gretta Trundle has run the inn for nearly two hundred years. Her husband passed away during the War of the Lance, and things just haven't been the same since. The inn is her entire life now, and she treats it like a child, often talking to the windows or singing to the staircase.

♣ **Gretta Trundle:** *Tinker gnome elder female, fastidious demeanor, Novice.* Co 7, Ph 2, In 8, Es 5, Dmg +2 (skillet), Def 0 (common clothing).

Bartle Reginald believes with all his soul that the gods never left Krynn. He claims that this is all a ruse to test the mortal races, and those who give up their beliefs and practices will be struck dead when the gods choose to reveal the truth. He runs this shop so that the gods will know that he never wavered in his belief. Some of the items are genuine artifacts, but most are either powerless relics or simple, ordinary materials (the "holy water" may be blessed by a priest, but it has no magical effects). Any item that Bartle sells is considered "blessed."

Bartle doesn't give out his name to anyone because he believes that to do so allows people to influence him magically. He fell afoul of one such person in the past and mistakenly believes that his name gave the woman the ability to command him to perform Evil actions.

♣ **Bartle Reginald:** *Human adult male, dogmatic demeanor, Adventurer.* Co 5, Ph 7, In 4 (16), Es 6 (36), Dmg +2 (weighted sash), Def -2 (leather), also mysticism (sensitivity), and sorcery (enchantment).

Named after Vinas Solamnus, who was a regular customer of her great grandfather's, Solamna Farseer runs the restaurant by herself. A Taste of Silvanost is more than a business to her—it is the one thing in all of Palanthas that has not changed in the better part of twenty-five hundred years. It is a point of pride to her that the longest-lived business in the city built on human greed is a simple elfen restaurant. She has a daughter (who is herself nearly eight hundred years old and working on a merchant ship based in Palanthas) who has agreed to take over the restaurant when Solamna passes away.

♣ **Solamna Farseer:** *Silvanesti elf elder female, modest demeanor, Master.* Co 6, Ph 2, In 8, Es 9, Dmg 0 (unarmed), Def 0 (common clothing).



The Tower of High Sorcery

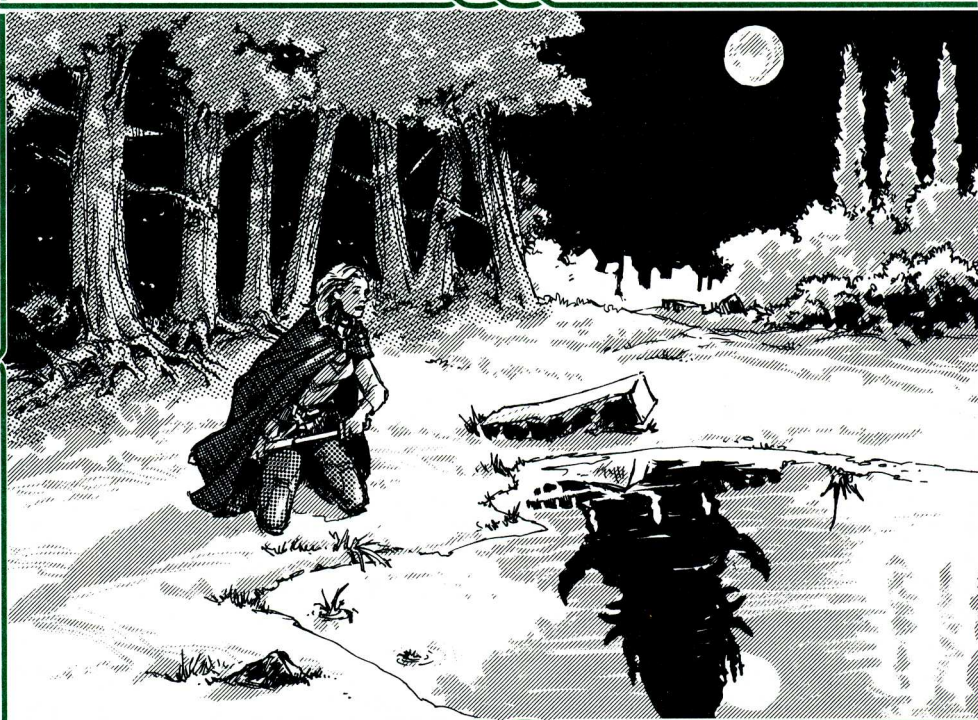
As you walk south from the Temple of Paladine, you may notice that, despite the warmth of the day, you begin to shiver, and goose flesh rises all over you. Do not be alarmed—this is a natural reaction as you approach the grounds of the Tower of High Sorcery. Don't bother looking up—the tower itself disappeared more than thirty years ago (I thought you certainly would know at least that much). Perhaps you need a brief lesson on the history of this terrible place.

The Tower, just one of the five Towers of High Sorcery ever built, has actually been on this plain longer than the city of Palanthis itself. How is that possible? According to my master, when the gods of magic—Solinari, Lunitari, and Nuitari—taught the secrets of High Sorcery to their first pupils, they bade them go forth into the world and build mighty

towers dedicated to the study of the arcane arts.

The mages built some towers in civilized lands, which allowed them to gather students and spread the knowledge of the gods. However, the mages also built towers in the wilderness, which allowed them to dedicate themselves to plumbing the depths of their new art without being disturbed by curious onlookers or petitioners who wished to use the powers of magic for their own selfish purposes. The Tower of Palanthis was, originally, the most remote of the Towers of High Sorcery. I find it rather amusing that the mages within our Tower grew accustomed to their separation from the rest of the world, and then later found themselves at the very heart of the greatest city on the continent.

Then again, perhaps the mages knew exactly what they were doing and chose this location because they *knew* Palanthis would one day rise around them.



Second guessing mages is a difficult, and usually fruitless, occupation.

The Grounds Today

You can see how, with a history as old as the city itself, the Tower of High Sorcery remains an integral part of Palanthas even though the building itself has vanished utterly. With all the mysterious incidents and world-altering events that the Tower loosed or inspired, and the array of legendary figures (many of whom are said to travel along the River of Time as freely as you or I might board a ship) who called the place home, no one is absolutely certain that we will not wake up one morning to find the Tower back in its familiar spot.

The Shoikan Grove

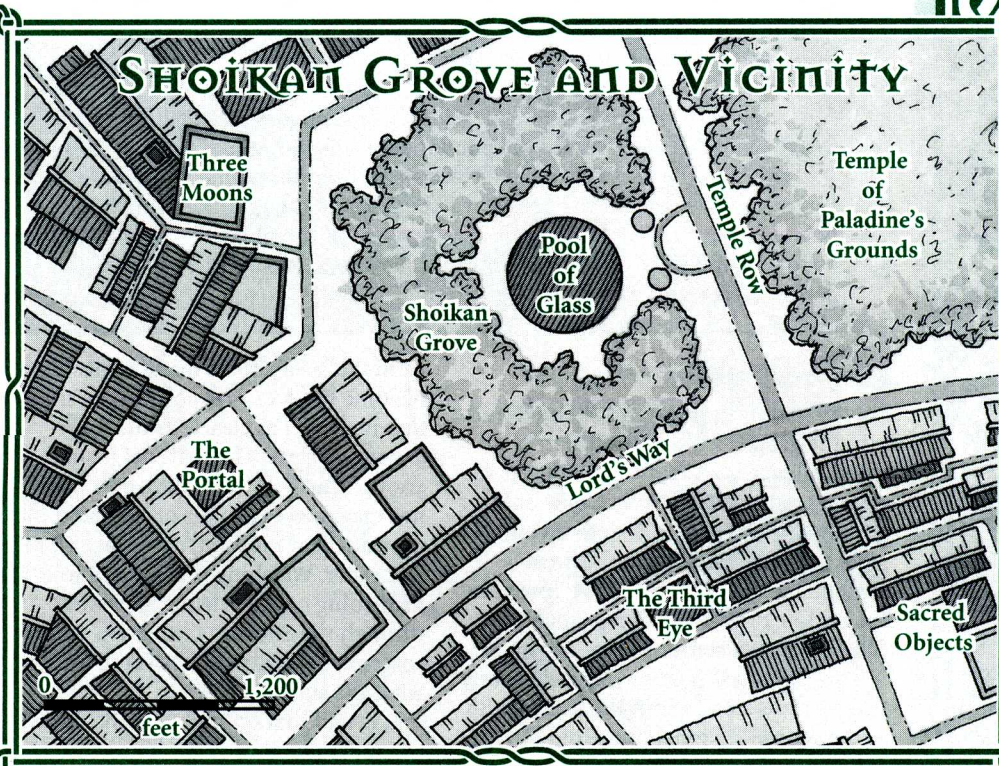
Perhaps the most compelling reason for the people of Palanthas to give this site a wide berth is the Shoikan Grove. This haunted stand of oak trees, enchanted to

protect the Tower from unwanted visitors, still surrounds the grounds and still radiates an aura of menace that makes it impossible for most folk to approach the Grove, let alone attempt to penetrate it.

The trees of the Shoikan Grove are overgrown and knotted, and stand so close together that no discernible path runs through them. Once under the leafy canopy, day turns to night and night turns to pitch. What's more, the Grove is haunted by malicious spirits.

Following the destruction of the Tower, while the newly-grown Grove was as terrifying as always, almost no one sighted undead creatures roaming its expanse as the monsters had once before. In recent days, however, terrible howls echo among the trees, and passers-by often report seeing ghostly figures and skeletons peeking out from behind the first row of trees.

My advice to you is to stay away from the Shoikan Grove. However, if you insist on braving its depths, then do so quickly—and well armed!





Narrators and the Tower of High Sorcery

Getting through the Shoikan Grove is equally a test of spirit and body. Working up the courage to even enter the Grove requires a successful *Spirit* action, the difficulty of which is determined by the card from which a hero drew his or her nature (if the card had a black aura the action is *challenging*; a red aura, *daunting*; and a white aura, *desperate*). Heroes who fail in this action find the palpable Evil and fear of the place too much for them to overcome; they may not enter the Grove unless they have one of the medallions that lifts the induced fear.

Physically squeezing oneself through the overgrown trees requires a successful *challenging Agility* action, except for centaurs, minotaurs, and members of other particularly large races, for whom the action is of *daunting* difficulty.

A trip through the Shoikan Grove may be necessary in your game scenarios, but it should always deeply disturb the heroes. The Narrator may want to use the trip for dramatic effect only or, instead, have the spirits of the Grove actually attack the heroes. Any undead creature may be used in such an attack, but skeletons, wraiths, and banshees are most commonly associated with the Grove.

Story Seeds

- ❧ When the heroes are engaged in an adventure in another section of Palanthas, they feel a sudden sense of dread and fear very much like the one associated with the Shoikan Grove. With no other warning, the ground erupts with oak saplings growing at a rate that can be achieved only magically. A new Grove forms before their eyes and engulfs a nearby building. Is the Grove somehow spreading on its own, or is there another force behind this? Either way, why was this particular site chosen? And can the heroes reverse the process?
- ❧ While walking through the neighborhood near the Tower, one of the heroes (one who has skills in sorcery) is stopped by a shocked passer-by who says “You’re the person in the pool!” The shocked citizen goes on to tell how he or she, on a bet, recently visited the pool of glass on the night of the full moon. The vision in the pool, the person claims, was everything that rumors claim and more. The faces of the people walking around the grounds in the reflection were plainly visible, and this hero was one of them! Is this person telling the truth, and if so, what does it mean? Likewise, if it is all a lie, why did this person create such a fanciful fabrication?

The Pool of Glass

Should you push through the Grove and into the grounds where the Tower once stood, silence is all that waits. Where once a mighty edifice stood, now only barren land stretches out before you, still cracked and scarred from the great earthquake that swallowed the Tower. In the middle of this land lies a small pool filled with a mysterious black substance.

The pool itself is a perfect circle nearly twenty feet across, about the same width as the central stairwell of the old Tower.

At first it seems to be made of obsidian or some black crystal polished so smooth that it reflects as clearly as the most expensive glass. The material is solid enough (no one that I have ever heard of has managed to dip his or her hand into it), but when touched, its surface ripples like water. Watching this is, I am told, as disturbing an experience as passing through the Shoikan Grove. No scholar, sorcerer, or alchemist has yet divined what the substance is.

It is said that on nights of the full moon, the pool of glass shows an eerie

reflection of the Tower of High Sorcery as though it still stood on the site. Some say that if you look closely at the reflection, you can see mages and apprentices running about the grounds, and a brooding figure in black robes standing on the Death Walk at the Tower's peak. I cannot, however, speak for the veracity of these rumors.

Neighboring Sites

Despite the monetary and social value of property in the Old City, particularly plots with a clear view of the Lord's Palace, much of the neighborhood surrounding the Tower of High Sorcery stands uninhabited. The terrible fear brought on by close proximity to the Shoikan Grove makes it such that only the bravest (or most depraved) of folk can stomach it for long.

All sorts of sorcerers, powerless former mages, and lunatics can be found in the two blocks surrounding the Grove. Most of them are harmless, but I do not recommend walking alone in the area on the night of a full moon.

The Three Moons

On the side of the street where the abandoned storefronts give way to fine shops and houses again, there is a business that most Palanthians never notice. It has no display of merchandise or notice announcing its presence; the only way to recognize it is by the simple placard bearing three discs: silver, black, and red. These symbolize the moons our world lost during the Second Cataclysm—the sources of power for the practitioners of High Sorcery.

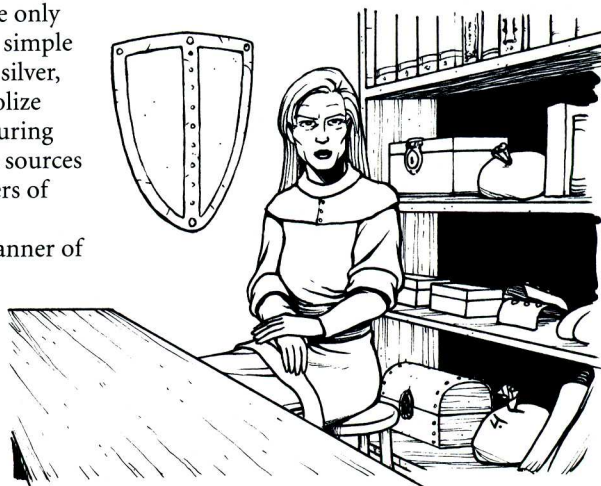
Inside you can find all manner of spices, roots, powders, and dried goods that once served as the building blocks of magic. Now, of course, they are merely curiosities. More interesting relics of the old ways

stock the shelves here: wands, staves, statues, and scrolls that were once blessed by the gods of magic, and some mementos from the Tower of High Sorcery itself.

The proprietress, you see, is none other than Mistress Jenna, former wizard of the Red Robes, daughter of Justarius, and long time consort of Dalamar the Dark. I dare say no one in all of Palanthas (perhaps all of western Ansalon) knows more about the final years of the Tower than Jenna, though she is loathe to discuss the subject.

She is, however, more than happy to talk about other matters. As you might guess, not much money comes into a mage shop such as this these days, so Jenna has taken to selling her knowledge. She is the one person in the city whose opinions all magic users seek out (perhaps because most of them suspect she knows the current location of the missing Dalamar, whose return they simultaneously desire and dread). She therefore comes into possession of quite a collection of sensitive information, which she will part with for a tidy sum payable in steel or other information that she can sell. I am told that several prominent political figures (including the Lord Knight himself) count themselves among the shop's clientele.

Mistress Jenna also teaches sorcery, though in a way unlike any I've ever





Narrators and the Sites Around the Tower

Narrators can use the following information and character profiles to help flesh out the area around the infamous Tower of High Sorcery.

The Death Walk

The owners and workers in the Portal share a common secret: They all are, or descend from, former practitioners of High Sorcery who lived in the Tower of High Sorcery. After the Tower disappeared, they banded together in a secret society called The Death Walk. The name originates from the balcony from which an ancient mage committed suicide in order to cast a spell to protect the place from the forces of the Kingpriest of Istar.

Like that long-dead mage, these people have sworn to keep the memory and reputation of the Tower alive, and they defend the stories from those who wish to see them fade into history. The makeup of the members varies as much as in any group of Palanthians; some have learned the new magic, while others have taught themselves more mundane skills. However, they are all sworn to die in the service of the Tower.

The odd drinks served at the Portal contain mild hallucinogens which, when mixed with the decor of the place and the stories told around the bar, cause many of the recent reports of undead creatures in the Shoikan Grove.

At sixty, Mistress Jenna is still strikingly beautiful and moves with an almost unnatural grace. She still feels personally wounded by both the gods' retreat and Dalamar's disappearance more than thirty years later. Still, it is her most fervent hope that both will return in due time. In the meantime, Jenna trusts no one and treats all her customers with a practiced indifference.

§ **Mistress Jenna:** *Human middle-aged female, deliberate demeanor, Hero.* Co 7, Ph 5, In 9 (81), Es 8 (64), Dmg +2 (quarterstaff), Def 0 (common clothing), also mysticism (sensitivity) and sorcery (enchantment, spectramancy, and summoning).

A complete aberration among her kind, Soothtongue is a frail, sickly minotaur girl of sixteen who has a natural gift for divination. She has been treated as an outcast ever since her powers began to manifest (since minotaurs generally have no skill in the sorcerous arts) and has developed a quirk-ridden personality. Soothtongue often mumbles and sings to herself in a high-pitched voice, and her predictions are usually cryptic and foreboding—but uncannily accurate.

§ **Soothtongue:** *Minotaur adolescent female, mysterious demeanor, Rabble.* Co 2, Ph 3, In 4 (16), Es 10, Dmg +1 (garrote), Def 0 (common clothing), also sorcery (divination).

Phyrenia Ironside first came to Soothetongue as a patron. The dwarf's young daughter went into the mountains to gather roots and flowers, and never returned. Phyrenia was beside herself with worry. Soothetongue entered a trance, then awoke with a shock. "Hurry! There is no time!" was all she shouted. Then she led the terrified dwarf into the hills overlooking the Old Temple District.

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Though her body was wracked with excruciating fits of coughing, the seer led Phyrenia to a ravine, pointed emphatically, then collapsed. At the bottom of ravine, Phyrenia found her daughter, cradled her in her arms, and the child smiled. "I knew you'd come, Mother," she said, and then closed her eyes for the final time. So deep was her pain that Phyrenia threw back her head and wailed until her voice disappeared. She has not spoken another word to this day. On her way back she came across the half-conscious minotaur, delirious with fever, and something passed between them. Phyrenia knew then and there that their lives were intertwined—that Soothetongue was now the only family she had.

❧ **Phyrenia Ironside:** *Daewar dwarf adult female, calm demeanor, Adventurer.*
Co 5, Ph 6, In 5, Es 6 (36), Dmg +3 (bludgeon), Def 0 (common clothing), also mysticism (sensitivity).

seen. If, in a patron, she spies the natural proclivity to harness the new magic, Jenna gives that person (if he or she chooses) an intense primer on spellcasting. The session lasts anywhere from two to ten hours. When it is done, the student has at least a rudimentary knowledge of spectramancy and enchantment, and his or her pocket is much lighter than it was at the start of the day.

Jenna has always been a bit of a cipher to me. Though we moved in some of the same circles, we never spoke much. On the few occasions that our paths cross these days she acts coolly cordial and moves on as quickly as etiquette allows.

The Portal

Every neighborhood needs eateries and pubs, and the Tower district has both in the Portal, a bar named after the infamous gateway to the Abyss that resided in the Tower's Laboratory. A replica of the Portal, a ring formed of a five-headed dragon, hangs above the entrance, and here and there paintings of and mementos from the Tower decorate the walls.


While the food at this establishment is by no means fit for the palate of a noble, it is exceedingly tasty and consists of generous portions (I suppose the owners know that they must do everything possible to encourage potential patrons to enter this shunned part of town). How-

ever, the drinks make the Portal an establishment that people talk about. The bartenders have several drinks for which no other pub in the city can divine the recipe. The drinks all taste sweet and come in a variety of unnatural colors. Except for the fact that nobody I know of creates such things nowadays, I would suspect that they were potions rather than libations.

The Third Eye

Though divination of all sorts is illegal under Dark Knight rule, the Tower district certainly has no shortage of fortune tellers. If you can bear to be less than fifty feet from the Shoikan Grove, the best (if oddest) prognosticator I have ever encountered maintains a shop over-





looking the haunted copse. I don't see how you could mistake the place, as it is the only business open on the block, but you will know you are there when you see a shingle bearing an image of a minotaur with three eyes.

The diviner, a young minotaur lass named—appropriately enough—Soothtongue, lives with a mute dwarf matron who cares for her. How this unlikely pair came together is unclear, but they are completely devoted to one another's well being.

Visiting her is a peculiar experience. Soothtongue has many flights of absurdity, often mumbling in rhyme and dancing about for no apparent reason. Due to her poor health, these displays invariably end in the minotaur collapsing with a fit of coughing. She requires several minutes to compose herself. All this would certainly lead you to pursue another seer if not for the fact that Soothtongue has never made an incorrect prediction. Unfortunately, a single vision exhausts her frail body to the point that she requires several hours of sleep before she can divine again.

Old City Wall

The demarcation between the Old City and the New is an ancient wall built by dwarf craftsmen during the Age of Might. Before this wall, an older, less sturdy wall enclosed the center of Palanthis, but I find it unclear whether the improvement was for aesthetic reasons (the wall is carved with images from Palanthis's history) or because the reigning Lord of Palanthis (a man known to be wildly unpopular with everyone but his many creditors) wanted to make it more difficult for the people to revolt.

What we call the Old City Wall actually consists of two walls surrounding a deep ditch filled with brackish mud and stagnant water. Each wall stands thirty feet high with an overhanging rampart to make scaling it difficult to the point of being a fruitless endeavor. All in all, the

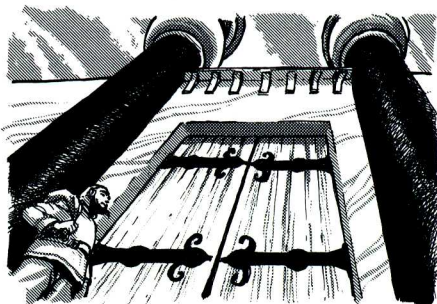
wall is a model of dwarven engineering. The walls themselves are tough enough to withstand practically any attack (anecdotal evidence exists to show that even a blue dragon's lightning breath can do no more than break off a few stones), and the muddy moat ensures that any invader who breaches the first wall becomes an easy target for guards standing on the second rampart.

The wall hasn't completely sealed off the Old City for many centuries, though. When the volume of ships entering the port became so great that the docks spread up along the edge of the New City, the wall was removed to allow free access along the waterfront. Commerce, after all, is the city's lifeblood, and not even military security should disrupt it.

The Gates

As you know, Palanthis is laid out like a wheel. The Old City is its circular hub, with large avenues reaching outward like spokes. Wherever these spokes meet and pass through the Old City Wall stands a great gate—a passage through the wall that guards can, in times of trouble, close and bar. Once the gate is barred, a steel portcullis may be lowered for added security.

If these gates are not proof enough that the wall was constructed with defense of the Old City in mind (after all, this is where the people who mattered most lived—the noble families and the richest merchants), each gate is guarded by a monumental pair of gatehouses. Rising three hundred feet into the sky, these towers (built to at least



resemble in passing the Tower of High Sorcery) look and act like fortresses unto themselves.

Each gatehouse has garrison rooms, armories, and scores of slits for archers to shoot from. Battlements circle the structures at forty and sixty feet above the ground as well as at the minaret so high up above. Perhaps guards fully manned these gatehouses at one point (the official record is suspiciously unclear on this point) but now the gatehouses languish in disuse—though they are structurally sound and it would take precious little effort, I'm told, to return them to peak efficiency.

Set in the bottom floor of each tower is an iron grating that leads into the Palanthas sewer system. This fact becomes disturbingly plain to the sensitive nose whenever something blocks the tunnels, or the city goes too long without a drenching rain.

Checkpoints

The gatehouses may not be operational, but the Dark Knights have set up checkpoints at each gate. In order to get into or out of the Old City, you must have the proper identification. Similar checkpoints run along the Knight's High Road to the Tower of the High Clerist and lie scattered all along the waterfront, so it is impossible, for all practical purposes, to enter Palanthas without getting identification papers. In order to do any kind of business, you need a special seal stamped on your papers. In addition, if you travel with a caravan, the sponsoring merchant must also sign a special document indicating that you are in his employ and that he takes full responsibility for all your actions.

The checkpoints usually consist of two Knights (though at the busier gates, and on market days, there may be as many as six) who look at your papers and ask you about your business. "Where are you coming from? Where are you going to? Are you carrying any weapons?" These are the questions they most often ask,

Getting Through Checkpoints

In most instances, getting across a checkpoint is a routine matter. The Dark Knight guards have no interest in interrogating innocent merchants. If the heroes' papers are in order, the chances are quite good that the Knights will simply let them pass. However, if the guards have been alerted to any suspicious activity along their road, they act more attentive and ask more probing questions of travelers. The Narrator should perform an aura check when the heroes arrive at the gate. If the card drawn has a black aura, the Knights seem suspicious of the group. If the card is from the Suit of Dragons, they discover exactly who the heroes are and what they are trying to do.

In many sections of town, heroes may purchase forged papers. The Narrator should decide how trustworthy and talented a particular forger is; his or her skill may affect the aura reading and make it more or less likely that the Knights snare the heroes. Particularly good forgeries may allow heroes to pass as priests or even city senators.

though they sometimes throw in more prying or leading questions like, "When was the last time you worshiped at the Shrine of Takhisis?" or "How much contraband have you smuggled in the past month?"

Anyone who has no papers, gives the wrong answers, or simply rubs the Knights the wrong way, is carted off to a nearby building whose occupants were evicted so that the Knights could use the place as their barracks and command post. I'm told that the questioning by these gatekeepers, while not physically abusive, is grueling and traumatic.





CHAPTER FOUR

The Old Temple District


Since accepting responsibility for the Order of Aesthetics, I find that the gardens of the Great Library no longer give me the solace and relaxation they once did. As such, I have had to seek escape from the tensions of my position in other locales. The one I find myself visiting most often is the Old Temple District.

Wandering up the great avenue called Temple Row, I soon find myself ensconced in an ancient and spiritual world. Although many of the residential buildings here reflect a more recent design, large and ornate buildings constructed during the final years of Vinas Solamnus's life dominate the neighborhood.

Vinas declared that the city bearing the name of the Father of Good should welcome worshipers of all the true gods, even those of Evil. To that end, he commissioned the construction of a temple for each god and worked with priests and lay-worshipers of each deity to arrange the sites in such a way as to avoid insulting any of the gods, or bringing partisan feuding gods near one another's temples.

The division of the district allows each pantheon (the gods of Good, Neutral, and Evil) to have a series of temples running up the hill in a more or less straight path. The temples to less powerful gods are lower on the hill, while the temples of Paladine and Takhisis overlook the entire city.

Furthermore, Vinas ordered that every aspect of the gods be accommodated by the design. So the Temple of Majere contains tapestries showing him not only as Palanthians worship him, but also as Ergothians, Qualinesti, and several other races envision him. Likewise, the proverbs carved into the walls refer to the god as Manthus, Matheri, and Nadir as well as Majere.



urrounding the wall, Kit saw New City, built just like Old City, in the same circular pattern. There are no walls around New City, since walls “detract from the overall design”, as one of the lords put it.

—Kitiara assesses Palanthas,
Time of the Twins

What we refer to as the New City has, in fact, been part of Palanthas for nearly two thousand years. While it represented, at one time, the phenomenal growth and prosperity the city enjoyed in the years immediately following its renaming, today the only tangible evidence that it differs from any other parts of Palanthas is the Old City Wall.

Some will point out that the New City sits higher on the hills than the center of Palanthas, but only those in the Old Temple District and on Nobles' Hill believe that elevation is a matter of importance (interestingly, it has opposite connotations in these two neighborhoods).

The New City covers at least three times as much land as the Old City does, and it consists of a much more diverse construction and cultural make up. A majority of Palanthians live in the New City, and the attitude of tolerance that pervades the communities here earn Palanthas the reputation of being the most sophisticated place in Ansalon. Though few of the city's distinctive buildings stand within this area, the New City remains as essential a part of Palanthas as the Great Library or Tower of High Sorcery.

Narrators and the Old Temple District

Narrators can use the following information to draw heroes farther into a Palanthas-based campaign or simply provide color during a brief visit by the heroes.

Clarissa Thurston joined the Temple shortly after Khellendros seized control of Palanthas and its environs. She lost her daughter and son to Gellidus and Sable (respectively) at that time and felt that the only way to overcome her grief was to help others. After a time, she became involved with the hidden circle of Solamnric Knights that works in Palanthas. To make it easier to contact her, Clarissa volunteered to work at Paladine's Temple during the day. Now she spends her days at Paladine's Temple and returns to the Temple of Paladine for evening worship and service. When she is needed, the circle contacts her there secretly.

☞ **Clarissa Thurston, Revered Daughter of Paladine:** *Human middle-aged female, open demeanor, Adventurer.* Co 6, Ph 6, In 7, Es 8 (64), Dmg 0 (unarmed), Def 0 (common clothing), also mysticism (channeling, healing, and sensitivity).

Kryon Darkwind left Abanasinia after receiving an unusual dream. He saw the buildings of Palanthas as if he were flying above them. He swooped down and found himself staring at the very temple he now lives in. Throughout the dream, he felt a sense of urgent need for him at the temple. The very next morning, he left for Palanthas.

Kryon spends his days and nights researching history, readying himself for worship services, training new priests and acolytes, and making himself available for any worshiper who might need his help. Occasionally, he leaves the temple in the hands of an acolyte to visit Bertrem.


☞ **Kryon Darkwind, Priest of Takhisis:** *Human elder male, thoughtful demeanor, Adventurer.* Co 5, Ph 5, In 7, Es 9 (81), Dmg 0 (unarmed), Def 0 (common clothing), also mysticism (channeling, necromancy, and spiritualism).

Jarrus Locastus was an Aesthetic who spent most of his waking hours transcribing popular ballads and unusual folk songs. In order to spend more time with his young son, Astin, he taught the boy the bardic arts. Before long, young Astin had the broadest repertoire and the purest voice in Palanthas. And though he would earn a tidy sum performing on street corners, he preferred to sing with his father. When Jarrus passed away, Astin thought he would never sing again. However, while on his way to visit the Temple of Gilean, he passed the Song of Life, and the sounds of reverie washing into the street soothed him so much that he walked through the door and directly onto the stage. He felt more alive than he ever had before and, more, he could feel his father's spirit there on stage with him.

Astin became an acolyte that very day and has been the order's most dedicated member from that moment to this. He has no greater joy in life than teaching others to sing. Thanks to his father and his Branchala-given gift of memory, he remembers every piece of music and lyric he has ever heard.

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- ✦ **Astin Locastus, High Priest of Branchala:** *Human middle-aged male, wild demeanor, Champion.* Co 7, Ph 6, In 8, Es 8, Dmg +4 (mandolin*), Def -2 (leather).

* Once the mandolin causes damage, it breaks.

Story Seeds

- ✦ Word spreads through the city that the Eternal Flame of Good in Paladine's Temple flickered and temporarily went out. Fortunately the flame re-ignited a few seconds later, but panic still spreads among the faithful. The flame has burned ceaselessly for centuries on end; what could possibly have caused it to go out? If the heroes investigate, they find the flame sputtering but still burning, though with a sickly green color. What does this mean? And can the heroes do anything to return the flame to its normal intensity and color?
- ✦ A local boy goes missing while playing near the Temple of Takhisis. The heroes should track him fairly easily—he somehow opened the secret door into the monolith. The door stands open yet, and when the heroes go in they find the boy asleep in the central chamber, unharmed but holding a ceremonial dagger that matches the carvings on the temple walls. The boy has no idea how he got there, but he insists the dagger is his. Is it? If so, why does it so closely resemble the temple etchings? If not, where did it come from?

Each temple is unique. Some possess tall columnar facades, some have cavernous prayer halls, and one consists of nothing more than a thicket of trees with a dais at its heart. However, very few of them serve as temples anymore.

During the Time of Darkness, people stopped worshipping the gods of old, and many of the temples slowly fell into disrepair, while worshipers abandoned others completely. As the years passed, new tenants moved into the buildings, sometimes remodeling them, sometimes tearing them down and building anew on the site. For hundreds of years, once-sacred buildings housed restaurants, butcher shops, and even brothels. Although several temples remained religious retreats, none of them held services regularly.

After the Blue Lady's War, when construction on the new Temple of Paladine began in the Old City, the Old Temple District saw revivification. Priests reclaimed and revitalized the temples that remained standing; Palanthas was in the grip of a religious revival that continues more or less to this day.

No matter which god you worship, you can find a temple in his or her honor somewhere on this hill—though finding it can sometimes be a time-consuming effort. Some of them have even achieved a measure of notoriety with nonworshippers.

Paladine's Temple

Though this site does not even approach the grandeur and majesty of the Temple in the Old City, Paladine's Temple is by far the most exquisite of the shrines in this district. A long, shallow reflecting pool, lined with strong oak trees, leads to a free-standing pagoda supported by fluted columns. Under the canopy lies a brazier in which burns a warm, white fire that needs no fuel, the Eternal Flame of Good. The flame burned through all the dark days when this temple was abandoned, leading nearby residents to suspect that something haunted the site.

Today priests from the larger Temple of Paladine in the Old City tend the shrine. Every morning two or three priests climb the road to this green plot.

Here they keep the water in the pool pure and clear (so that the reflections one sees in it are true), tend the grounds, and make themselves available to any distraught worshipers. Revered Daughter Clarissa Thurston, who directs the efforts of the priests in this temple, resides in the Temple in the Old City, though you can often find her here during the day.

After dark, many young lovers make the temple their destination so that they can sit by the pool or walk in the moonlight with a feeling of complete security. In all the years it has stood, the temple has never been the scene of an accident or violence.

The Temple of Takhisis

If you walk from Paladine's Temple directly toward the bay, you will soon come upon an imposing cube of a building with long, steep stairs climbing each side. The sides of the building have intricate carvings with a design that, when closely examined, turns out to be a pattern of human skulls pierced by ceremonial daggers. This is the Temple of Takhisis.

No matter the season, the skies become overcast and the wind carries a winter's chill when you begin to climb the stairs to a broad, open-air platform on the temple's roof. The carving atop the platform shows the Dark Queen's visage—a five-headed dragon—poised to swallow Krynn.

Of all the temples in this district, this one is the strangest. Nowhere else on Krynn stands a monolith like this one, dedicated to Takhisis or not. It seems more like an altar for animal sacrifices than it does a monument to the greatness of the Dark Queen. Perhaps the priests of Takhisis, knowing that this temple would stand in a city named after their mistress' greatest adversary, wanted an edifice that would strike fear and loathing into the hearts of the residents.

Stranger still is the priest who resides at this temple. Kryon Darkwind, originally from Abanasinia, came to Palan-

thas before Chaos walked the land and has been running the temple ever since. I've often had the occasion to talk to Kryon. He likes to read historical treatises, and he often has clarifying questions for me. The unnerving thing about him is that his dark stare seems to go right through you, making you feel as if he knew every secret thought you've ever had. Needless to say, I don't find my visits to his temple very comforting.

Another strange fact about the temple is that very few people know that the structure is hollow. (The Great Library contains the original blueprints for all the temples in this district.) The secret for opening the concealed entrance, however, has been lost to the ravages of time. In days past, though, anecdotal evidence suggests that the priests would use the secrecy these hidden rooms provided to cast spells meant to bring about the city's downfall. It is unclear whether any such spells were cast before the Summer of Chaos.

The Song of Life

The Temple of Branchala was, by all reports, a magnificent domed building with stained-glass doors and ivy covering the walls. Sadly, a man with a yearning to make one of the largest taverns in Palanthas destroyed the temple during the Age of Might. When the Old Temple District began its renewal, the priests of Branchala—who found the tavern to be terribly fitting to Branchala—bought the land but kept the tavern, renaming it the Song of Life (one of Branchala's pseudonyms).

It stands today as one of the most popular merrymaking establishments in the city, still run by priests of Branchala (many of whom, coincidentally, once tended bar at other taverns). You'll find that the tavern is the one place in Palanthas where you are guaranteed to hear a bard sing every night of the week.

During the day, the tavern serves as a bard academy run by the High Priest, Astin Locastus. While no famous bards have yet come from the school, graduates





have an unmatched passion for singing and a truly phenomenal repertoire of songs spanning all of Ansalon's eras and cultures.

Residential Districts

Have you noticed that the New City consists mostly of homes? Wherever you look are houses, mansions, and palatial estates of every size, color, and architectural style. It is quite easy to forget, living in the heart of the city, that the majority of Palanthians can go months or years without ever passing by the Great Library or the Temple of Paladine. To them, these structures symbolize the city, but they do not make up the whole tapestry of their lives.

Palanthas consists of many types of neighborhoods: some rich, others poor, some elf, dwarf, gnome, kender, minotaur, human, and even gully dwarf neighborhoods (though most travelers will never visit the latter, nor should they want to). For the most part, though, the

various races have commingled throughout the various communities. The great stratifier in Palanthas is altitude.

The farther one gets from the Central Plaza, the higher one goes into the hills. Since buildings cannot be raised on uneven ground (at least, not if one wishes them to remain standing for very long), the dwarves who constructed most of the city chipped the mountain face into a series of plateaus on which they could safely build. And, as a general rule, the farther one goes into the hills, the wealthier the community one finds living there. Socially conscious folk often use the view from their gates as a measure of status. The one whose vista takes in the greater number of important sights (and is assumedly highest up the hill) is considered the upper rung on the social ladder in the New City.

Only one community in Palanthas reverses this dictum: the residents of Nobles' Hill. In that exclusive community, a property's value is perceived by how close it stands to the Central Plaza

or, more accurately, the Lord's Palace. Owning property at the top of Nobles' Hill may give a family the finest view of Palanthas, but living at the hill's foot gives the family power. Remember, anyone living in the Old City section of the hill automatically gains a seat in the City Senate. All other nobles must take turns filling the remaining seats for one-year terms. Generally, a particular lord or lady will be a senator only one out of every six years.

Most communities more or less support themselves. They have markets, taverns, and shops to suit their station on the hill. The finest restaurants, therefore, are generally found in the hills. However, even the most opulent homes send the servants to shop in the Old City most of the time. They can find the widest selection and highest quality of goods in that area of the city.

As we stroll, let me point out a few distinct communities, by way of example. Remember that they are by no means unique; at least a half dozen other neighborhoods throughout Palanthas appear nearly identical to each of these, though each possesses its own minor eccentricities.

Smith's Alley

Most communities, as you know, consist of clumps of homes in very close proximity to one another. Along the western edge of the Old City Wall, however, lies a community that stretches for twenty city blocks and never gets any wider than one dark, crumbling street.

One can walk past Smith's Alley twice a day for an entire lifetime and never even notice that it's there. Barely wide

enough for two dwarves to walk abreast, the street looks more like an inadvertent gap between buildings than a thoroughfare. However, in the city's infancy, all the metalsmiths built their shops on this street, hence the name. Anyone who needed a horse shod, a sword forged, or gold smelted and recast had no choice but to come here. However, when the smoke from the kilns began to blacken the buildings of the nearby Old Temple District, the City Senate ordered the smithies to relocate. Many of them simply took up different trades—after all, their shops hardly brought in enough


coin to afford to move to more affluent neighborhoods.

Today, though one or two silversmiths and metallurgists still stoke their fires in the alley, the only remnant of the place's roots is the unusually high number of families named Smith or Smitty.

Smith's Alley Story Seed

- ✧ A mother from Smith's Alley asks the heroes' help in finding her infant son, who was stolen from his crib. After an exhaustive search they find that the boy has been sold to an heirless family on Nobles' Hill. This couple can provide the child with all the benefits of their station, while his parents can offer him nothing but poverty. Both families love the boy and want what's best for him. How will the heroes solve this dilemma?





Smith's Alley has deteriorated into a gray, dank lane with a reputation as black as the soot that still clings to the buildings. A person of breeding would, I imagine, rather be cast adrift on the outgoing tide than find him or herself in Smith's Alley after sundown. The community, though, has bonded together like no other I've ever observed. Every mother treats every unwashed child like her own, and any family that must spend all its income on its meager rent often finds that food, clothing, and other necessities make their way into the home anonymously.

The city as a whole is largely unaware of Smith's Alley (or if they remain unaware of it then surely they know nothing of its name), and I would be too if not for a fellow Aesthetic named Fenwig Smith.

He himself was raised in this squalor and saw the Order of Aesthetics as a way out. However, as so often happens when one attempts to flee from oneself, Fenwig found that the tales he captured best detailed the people and history of his own community.

These tales portrayed honor, passion, and devotion worthy of any Solamnic parable, but they are absolutely true. What's more, they have proven an invaluable addition to the Library's collection. Too often the annals of history are the exclusive province of the rich. Thanks to Fenwig, the noble people of Smith's Alley have a place beside those of Nobles' Hill. And that is, I believe, just how my master would want it.

Purple Ridge

Just to the north of the Merchandising District lies a section of Palanthas where slopes climb so steeply that construction cannot go very high into the hills. When the sun begins to set, the homes beneath this territory are quickly cast into deep, almost dismal darkness; however, from other parts of the city, the houses in the neighborhood seem to turn a rich purple color. This phenomenon has earned the area the name Purple Ridge.

Home to a better than average class of merchants, Purple Ridge is in many ways an interim community for those who wish to build eventually on Nobles' Hill. Some might achieve their dreams by marrying into noble families, while others slip back into poverty, but practically no one remains in Purple Ridge for longer than ten years.

Because of this, it is a difficult task to ascribe a particular mood, flavor, or cultural milieu to the neighborhood; the place is in a constant state of flux. During the War of the Lance, for instance, the residents by and large descended from Solamnian humans, while at the time of the Chaos War, the denizens were split nearly equally between humans, dwarves, and minotaurs (these last being sea captains who thought to retire in Palanthas).

Now, the Purple Ridge population consists of an odd mix of successful merchants who have been displaced from their homelands in the wake of the invasions of the dragon overlords. Silvanesti elves caught outside the Silvanesti Shield, dwarves unable to return to sealed Thorbardin, and all manner of human, gnome, and half-elf refugees live here. The area's most infamous resident, though, is the painter Geor uth Vingaard.

Anyone at all familiar with the fine arts knows Geor as the half-elf who came to Palanthas with a shipping crate full of exquisitely painted canvases and a heart-rending story about fleeing from his studio and school in Daltigoth when Gellidus arrived in Southern Ergoth. He sold the collection at half its estimated value and counted himself lucky to have found such generous people. Later, someone discovered that at least one of the paintings he claimed as his own was stolen from the Imperial collection in Gwynned, while three others were poorly disguised plagiarism of early Solamnian masterpieces. Whoever Geor is, he certainly is neither an artist nor a teacher. By that time, though, the scoundrel had stepped from the glare of public life and supposedly retired to a modest villa in

Personalities of Purple Ridge and Golden Estates

Geor uth Vingaard is nothing more than a disguise adopted by Kaine Bliss, a thief and con man whose father was portrait painter to the noble families of Ergoth. Kaine worked his way through the Ergothian court, seducing wives and daughters and swindling them out of as much steel and jewelry as possible. When pressure for his arrest became too great, he fled to Palanthas, where he used his familiarity with fine art and courtly behavior to pass himself off as an “artiste.” His family in Ergoth paid his debts simply to be rid of this black sheep, so no one is coming after him. All “Geor” must do now is wait until talk of his forgery fades from memory, and then he will be free to return to his fraudulent ways.

♣ **Geor uth Vingaard (Kaine Bliss)*:** *Half-elf adult male, artistic (scheming)* demeanor, Champion.* Co 9, Ph 5, In 8, Es 6, Dmg +7 (short sword of renown), Def -2 (leather).

* Kaine has adopted a false name and demeanor.

Legarto Deoro is one of the human guises used by Arumnus, the clan leader of the gold dragons. For generations he has worked with the Aesthetics of the Great Library, duplicating the most important books in their collection and periodically carrying them back to the Dragon Isles. He had hoped to completely replicate Astinus’s collection there so that the knowledge would never be lost, no matter what acts of vandalism the less mature mortal races performed. More information on Arumnus can be found in the *Wings of Fury* dramatic supplement.

♣ **Legarto Deoro (Arumnus):** *Human middle-aged male (male ancient gold wyrm)*, calm demeanor.* Co 14, Ph 66, In 19 (361), Es 19 (361), Dmg +60, Def -40, also dragon breath, swallow whole, dragonawe, dive attack, sorcery (divination), and mysticism (alteration, channeling, and meditation).

* Arumnus takes on a human form using alteration magic.

Purple Ridge. Unfortunately, nobody knows exactly where he lives, and nobody has seen him since.

Golden Estates

Walking from the midst of Nobles’ Hill toward the bay, just where the hills rise one last time before descending down to the water’s edge, you’ll find a district of elegant houses. These buildings blend in with the land so perfectly that some folk claim they grew there naturally, and the dwarf engineers who built Palanthas merely echoed their style on the new city.

This community, known as Golden Estates, is by far the richest neighborhood that is *not* on Nobles’ Hill. Each house sits on a piece of property at least as large as a city block, decorated with orchards, gardens, and fountains of classic design. However, unlike residents of the more famous sanctuary for the uncommonly rich, the people of Golden Estates are warm and welcoming.

I am personally acquainted with quite a few of these families, who are all very active in not only the affairs of state, but also those of the greater community of Palanthas. These philanthropists underwrite repairs to buildings in the poorer





neighborhoods not because they see some profit in it or want a street named in their honor, but rather because they feel it is the right thing to do. Would that more people like them lived in the world.

I cannot calculate exactly how many causes, movements, and actions owe their success at least in part to financial support from the community of Golden Estates, but Ansalon would be a much poorer place were it not for these generous people. Anyone involved in a worthy endeavor can expect to receive a cordial greeting and fair hearing from these altruists and, should they garner enough sympathy, liberal monetary support as well.

One man in particular, Legarto Deoro, has been a particular friend to the Great Library. He has sponsored a dozen or more expeditions for Aesthetics to travel to other libraries or private collections and transcribe rare or unique volumes. All he asks in return is that his scribes be

allowed access to the volume after it is placed in the Library's collection; Deoro himself has an immense collection of tomes and scrolls, some of which I myself had never heard of, let alone seen. He has always proved willing to furnish us with copies of these texts and aid as best he can in translating particularly arcane manuscripts.

The University of Palanthas

You'll notice that two roads lead northeast out of Palanthas and, by consulting your map, that they merge, then head deeper into the mountains. You can find one of the finest institutions of higher education on the continent at this fork: the University of Palanthas.

Actually built across and down into a narrow gorge, the University is probably the most underappreciated structure in Palanthas. Whenever I stand on this

ridge overlooking the campus, I wish that I were welcome there.

Oh, there is no personal enmity between the University and myself. However, that institution has a long and ugly history with my own Order of Aesthetics, and while neither group denies the other access to its resources, an underlying tension prevents us from collaborating or truly sharing information. The history of this conflict dates back to the days before the Kingpriests of Istar.

In the years following the death of Vinas Solamnus, when my master Astinus had only just formed his Order of Aesthetics, a group of scholars visited the Great Library. They described to Astinus a plan to build a great seat of learning, where people from across the world would come to discover the fundamental truths about all things. The Library, they said, would be the heart of this school, and my master would be the administrator, while they would form the core of the faculty. With the raw information in the Library's tomes, and the accumulated wisdom and experience of all the scholars involved, they said, the preeminence of this institution would never be challenged.

My master did not even do the scholars the dignity of considering the proposal. I've heard that he simply turned his back and left the room.

When the scholars came to him asking how they had offended him, my master replied, "By the mockery your offer makes of my work. The purpose of

my labor is to free mortal minds from those who would tell them that their singular opinions are, in fact, hard truth. People like you—who insist that the results of your analyzing and interpreting comprise fact, rather than academic hearsay—you are the ones who keep me at my task. No! You may not use my library to spread your lust for intellectual domination, though I highly encourage anyone foolish enough to become your student to come hear and find the truth for him or herself. Now be gone!"

Well, leave they did, and went on to establish the University of Palanthas (which equaled their expectations despite not being officially connected with the Great Library). Through all the centuries, though, the school has maintained an enmity toward the Order of Aesthetics, maintaining that we are self-important antiquarians who dole out our knowledge to only a select few.

Meanwhile, I must confess, the Aesthetics generally consider the University faculty to be closed-minded iconoclasts who force-feed their warped perspectives on history, the sciences, and the arts into innocent minds that are too inexperienced to tell truth from supposition. Still, I doubt any one of us would deny that the University of Palanthas is the finest institute of higher education in Solamnna, and quite probably all of Ansalon. We simply do not value that as highly as some people do.

University of Palanthas Story Seed

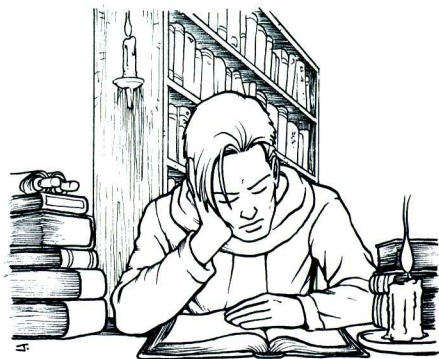
- ❖ Word filters into Palanthas that something terrible has happened at the University. When the heroes go to investigate, they find the entire campus encased in a bubble of pink crystal. Inside, the heroes can see the students and scholars moving around with blank, glassy expressions on their faces. They seem to be building something deep within one of the laboratories. The crystal is warm to the touch, pulses with what could be life, and emits a high-pitched hum when touched. What is this crystal, and how did it come to engulf the University? Is it an attack or an experiment gone wrong? And what can the heroes do to free the students and teachers?



Life at the University

Each floor of the ten-story structure is a mini-campus containing lecture halls, laboratories, dorm rooms, and study halls for students of one particular subject. At the bottom of the gorge lies a magnificent garden as well as a dining room that serves two meals a day. Though the University maintains a well-stocked reading room, the students usually come to the public wing of the Great Library to do any serious research.

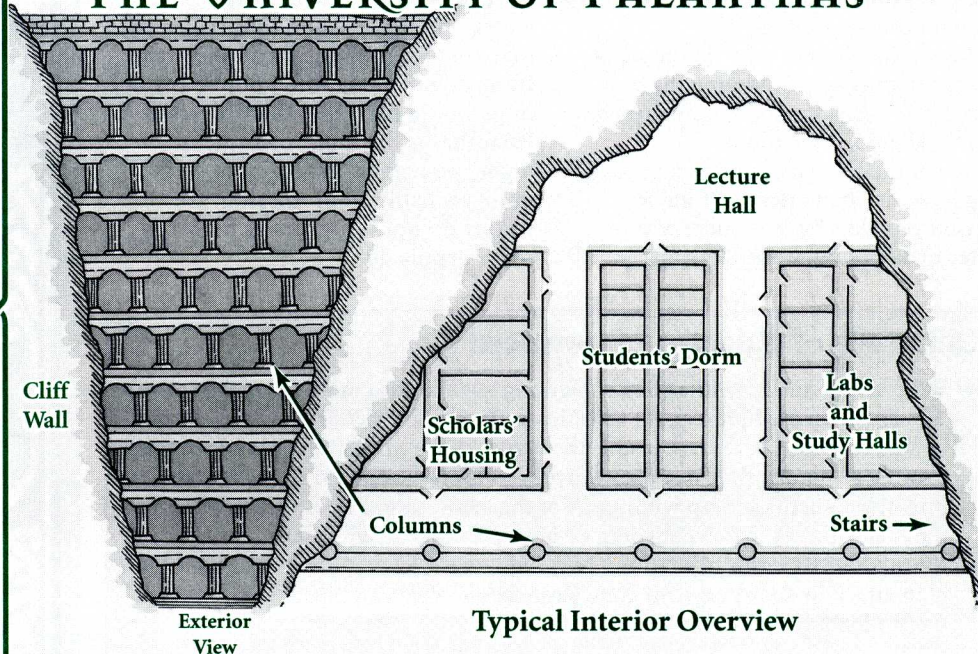
Major areas of study include history, military history, literature, philosophy, several of the sciences, healing, and law (which includes Palanthian law, as well as the laws of various countries). Classes are held year round. It generally takes a student between three and five years to complete a course of study, which culminates in a written and oral thesis whose presentation can last for up to two weeks. (After this, I cannot wonder that the newly graduated scholars con-



sider themselves the ultimate authorities on their particular subject matters.)

Graduates from the University often go on to work within their fields, but a significant number of them decide to remain within academia, accepting teaching positions at elementary teaching facilities, other colleges, or as private tutors. They also dream of one day being invited back to the University of Palanthas as a member of its elite faculty.

THE UNIVERSITY OF PALANTHAS



New Role: University Scholar

Teaching is a time-honored profession that requires patience, expertise, and empathy, but offers relatively little in the way of monetary rewards. It does, however give a hero a base of operations and a group of peers with expertise in a wide array of subjects, not to mention several months of the year free to go adventuring when the University is not in session.

Roleplaying

Scholars are renowned for filling their heads with great volumes worth of information on a particular subject. Others accuse them, though, of being deficient in many other areas (often ones that most folk consider quite essential—like survival instincts). Scholars can display nearly any temperament or possess any background. All they need is a particular subject that they use as the template to which they compare the entire world. A scholar of geology, for example, sees everything in terms of rocks (or analogies to rocks), much to the consternation of his less educated companions.

Requirements

The first thing a hero must do is choose an area of expertise. In whatever ability that governs the subject (as determined by the Narrator), the hero must have a minimum score of 8 and code of “A.” Most areas of knowledge would fall under Reason, but if a player chooses something like “Desert Avian Lore and Identification,” the Narrator can choose to make the relevant ability Perception, or even go so far as to require both Reason and Perception.

Furthermore, the hero must lecture to large groups of students and so cannot have a Presence code lower than “B.”

Heroes may acquire this role during play *if* the Narrator decides that the University faculty extends the hero an invitation to join their staff.

Advantages


Whenever a question arises that pertains to the scholar’s area of expertise, the hero may use the appropriate ability to attempt an *easy* action. If it succeeds, the scholar knows the answer to the question. If a character poses a “trick question” to the hero, the character opposes the action. The Narrator should use the character’s Reason score (or other relevant ability) as the opposition number.

In addition, the scholar has nearly free rein in giving assignments to students. As a result, these heroes can get their students to do quite a lot of investigating and even manual labor in the name of “extra credit.”

Disadvantages

Despite the fact that this role might require a code of “A” in Reason or Spirit, the amount of time devoted to studying his or her area of expertise does not allow the scholar to take full advantage of the possibilities the code offers. Unless the scholar’s area of expertise is spellcasting, the hero cannot possess skills in more than one school of sorcery or sphere of mysticism. Furthermore, when staying in Palanthas, the hero must spend no fewer than twenty hours per week teaching, tutoring, and advising University students.





The key to receiving such an invitation, it seems, is to publish exhaustive manuscripts on finer and finer aspects of one's original thesis until one finds a topic so obscure that no one can understand what it truly means. Rather than admit their own ignorance, the University faculty declares the author a genius and tenders him or her an offer.

But see, the students and faculty below have recognized me and I doubt they're coming here to ask us to tea. It might be more comfortable for us if we return to the city before they arrive. I have pressing business back at the Library, but let me leave you with a guide I have used on a number of excursions into Palanthis's darker corners. He will, I'm sure, be able to show you things that even I don't know exist.

The Merchandising District

And how has your tour of our fair city gone so far? Well? Did that musty old book of a man show you more libraries and temples than you thought were ever built?

Typical!

Well, he's gone on back to his scrolls and tomes now, and you're in the tender care of "Copper" Driftwood! Don't worry though, I almost never lose tourists—unless they ask to be lost.

Let's start somewhere a little more lively than that school you've just come from (though I hear those students chased you halfway back to town—but that's youth for you). We're going to the Merchandising District!

Don't go rolling your eyes at me! I know you've been through the Trade Exchange down by the piers, but this is something very different.

You see, the Exchange is where all the tourists shop. Anyone traveling to or from Palanthis in style *has* to go through there, and the moneybags on the hilltops think the best goods never get any further inland than the Old City shops. The merchants know it, though, and charge a

shiny steel more for the privilege of buying from their shops.

The Merchandising District, on the other hand, is a long way from the tourist sites, and high up the hill on top of that. Anyone coming to Palanthis this way has crossed the pass from the High Clerist's Tower, and that's no way for a noble arse to travel.

This place is where the *people* of Palanthis buy the things they need to get through the days and weeks of their lives. You'll find grocers, cobblers, tailors, butchers, and all the other people who make or sell the necessities of life. More importantly, you'll find they do it at a price you can afford. What good does it do to be the best baker in town if no one can afford your bread?

Look around. Can't you see the difference in these peoples' faces? They're smiling, laughing, and just standing around talking to one another! With all the unusual goods and fine merchandise you saw in the Exchange, I'll bet common courtesy and fellowship were the rarest commodities of all.

Over by that hitching post stands Stone Keefe, the poet of the East Ridge. You'll find him at some street corner every day selling poems for five coppers apiece, and fine works they are too. He'll tell you stories of Palanthis that neither Bertrem nor any of his Aesthetics ever heard of and all of them in rhyme! Go ask him to tell you about Lord Barrim and the laughing mule—that tale never made the Senate's register.

Just keep your eyes open. Not *every* person you meet here will be as neighborly as most of us. The Lord Knight keeps a small cadre of Knights stationed up here in case anyone's fool enough to sneak a band of rebels in disguised as a merchant caravan. It's too peaceful for them, so they sometimes take to harassing the local merchants.

South Gate

The Knights are stationed at that gatehouse at the edge of town. See? It's the only new building within a quarter mile.

Personalities of the Merchandising District

Videck Sargonnas joined the Knights of Takhisis to garner fame and power. He is more ambitious than any three of his fellows and quickly rose to the rank of Knight-Officer. His unruly temper caused him to be demoted almost immediately. He sees his position as leader of the South Gate garrison as the first step to regaining his former rank. All he needs is one great victory over the seditious forces he *knows* lurk in the midst of the Merchandising District.

☞ **Videck Sargonnas, a Knight of the Lily:** *Human adult male, impulsive demeanor, Adventurer.* Co 5, Ph 8, In 5, Es 8, Dmg +9 (great sword), Def -5 (plate).

Petalfoot has always been a child of two worlds; her mother was a Mikku shaman from the lands of Khur, and her father was a Solamnic Knight. She has lived her entire life in Palanthas, but her neighbors still consider her to be a barbarian. The truth is that her shy personality is very much a gift from her mother, but deep in Petalfoot's heart burns her father's passion and defiance. More than anyone else, she resents the actions of Sir Sargonnas and dreams of slipping a pinch too much poison-fern into his next poultice. Though no one knows it, she is a natural mystic and uses her powers to increase the efficacy of the ingredients in her potions, making remedies she produces twice as effective as they would be normally.

☞ **Petalfoot:** *Barbarian human adult female, modest demeanor, Champion.* Co 7, Ph 4, In 7, Es 7 (49), Dmg +2 (throwing stick), Def -2 (leather), also mysticism (animism).

Although Mac Oremann is a trained alchemist, his true talent lies in forgery. The merchants who visit his shop come seeking false papers that allow them to leave the city on business and bring back items that the Dark Knights heavily tax or ban altogether. His trips to the mountains allow him to dig up satchels full of iron ore (an important ingredient in the special ink the Lord Knight uses on all official documents. Mac accepts new customers by referral only and completely denies his activities if confronted.

☞ **Mac Oremann:** *Human adult male, distant (roguish)* demeanor, Adventurer.* Co 9, Ph 4, In 6, Es 2, Dmg +3 (short sword), Def -2 (leather).

* The demeanor in parenthesis is Mac's true demeanor.

Garreth Hemsquare opened his shop the summer before the Chaos War. Though an adequate tailor, his designs were never fashionable, and his eyesight has grown worse monthly. He has no family, though, and the shop is everything to him, so his neighbors still buy the occasional item from him and bring in torn clothing for him to mend.

Little do they know that Garreth's infirmity is all an act. He is really an informer to the Dark Knights, planted here to gather intelligence before their first assault on Palanthas. He takes the gossip he hears and information he gleans from the contents of people's pockets and sells it to Sir Sargonnas. At this point, he has no knowledge of Ammal Broadcrest's secret identity (see below).

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✚ **Garreth Hemsquare:** *Human elder male, kind (cunning)* demeanor, Champion. Co 6, Ph 5, In 9, Es 6, Dmg +2 (dagger), Def 0 (common clothing).*

* The demeanor in parenthesis is Garreth's true demeanor.

Though Ammal Broadcrest is a skilled carpenter and enjoys his work, his carpentry is all merely a ruse. As a member of the Legion of Steel, he cannot operate openly (he uses his "building inspections" to mask his efforts to eavesdrop on potential troublemakers). Despite his secret agenda, he has earned the respect and trust of the good people in the district. Still, he is always mindful of Sir Sargonnas, who seems to keep a close eye on Ammal as though the Knight suspects the truth. Ammal doesn't know of Garreth's connection to the Dark Knights yet.

✚ **Ammal Broadcrest:** *Human adult male, gregarious (methodical)* demeanor, Champion. Co 8, Ph 9, In 5, Es 6, Dmg +7 (sledgehammer), Def -2 (leather).*

* The demeanor in parenthesis is Ammal's true demeanor.

It looks like someone dropped a horse-shoe headfirst into the ground then built a house around it. A dozen or so Knights live there, and a cruel knave aptly named Videck Sargonnas leads them.

Although their assignment is to issue identification papers to arriving merchants and guard the city from possible invasion from the south (not a terribly likely event, as anyone who's studied Palanthian history will tell you), Sir Sargonnas believes that the people of the district constantly plot to overthrow the Lord Knight and take Palanthas back. The truth is, the only person these folk

would like to see overthrown is Sargonnas! He makes their lives miserable and has spies hidden throughout the community—spies, I might add, who often incites commotion just so the Knights have trouble to put down.

Blossoms

Large shops and markets line the main road of the district. You can find the really interesting stores, though, along the smaller streets. Back here, for instance, not a hundred feet from the bustle nestles a little shop with a very pretty sign reading "Blossoms." With those purple and blue buds woven into the letters, you'd think this was a flower shop right? Wrong! Blossoms is the most complete herb shop I've ever seen anywhere.

The owner, a lovely barbarian lass named Petalfoot, runs the place and mixes every potion, poultice, and powder she sells. Come in and you'll find the shop buried in jars, bags, and flasks of crushed roots. Plus you can visit a veritable greenhouse in the back filled with the flowers Petalfoot needs to keep fresh.

Known far and wide as the best herbalist in the New City, she counts nobles and Knights among her cus-



tomers, but Petalfoot reserves her finest recipes for her neighbors. I've seen her give away a terribly rare and expensive bag of herbs to an old man just because he looked tired. She more than makes up for it, though, by overcharging the Dark Knights who come into her shop.

I'm not sure why, but Petalfoot has a deep hatred for the Knights. I've seen a murderous look flash across her face when Sir Sargonnas walks past her door—there's some history there, I tell you. I just hope I'm nowhere around when it comes to a head.



you're likely to meet in this life.

I remember a coat I bought from Master Hemsquare the first time I signed on as a ship's officer (I was boson on a ship bound for Port Balifor). Oh, a wonderful coat it was, thick and sturdy, just the exact shade of blue as the

sea an hour before dawn. Well, the sleeves weren't the same lengths, but I loved that coat all the same. Master Hemsquare made me promise to come back when I returned to port to show him how the coat had fared, and to tell him about everything I'd seen.

I make a point of going back there every few months to buy a shirt or a cap I don't really need. The old man's sense of style left Palanthas with the gods themselves, but he's a dear fellow.

The Philosopher's Stone

That closed shop over there belongs to Mac Oremann, the local alchemist. He calls his place The Philosopher's Stone—the magical ingredient that alchemists use to transmute lead to gold. Mac is convinced that another rock just like the philosopher's stone will transform any common metal into pure, tempered steel; he spends half his days up in the hills digging for it, to no avail. The other days, he sells the potions, oils, and creams that folks expect from an alchemist.

Though I've never found his products to be of exceptional quality, Mac does a great deal of business with merchants and sea traders. Maybe his hands make a brighter, longer burning torch or a salve that fills the cracks in damaged pottery.

Second Skin

A tailor shop around this corner has been there since I was a young man. The owner is a pleasant fellow named Garreth Hemsquare and, while a little shaky of hand these days, he is as nice a man as

The Singing Hammer

Wide shoulders and a strong back are commodities that many young men in the district possess. Not many of them have Ammal Broadcrest's skill as a carpenter, though. A man of his word and friend to all, Ammal has no lack of work. While he prefers cabinetry to construction, the merchants of the district pay a great deal for sturdy additions to their shops (and an even greater deal for additions to their homes). What's more, when one of the poor families or older folks needs a leak patched or a door frame reset, Ammal is there on his day off, doing the job out of the goodness of his heart.

Most days you can see him atop a ladder, wielding a hammer taller than I am as if it were a toy sword. I've never seen anyone perform such delicate work with such a massive tool! When he's not



building, you'll find Ammal walking the neighborhood checking the beams, walls, and roofs of the other shops and homes.

The Waterfront

You look a bit peaked, my friend. Have you eaten yet? No? Well, the one thing we have plenty of in Palanthis is seafood, and the best seafood I know of can be found along the waterfront. Luckily for you, that's just where we're heading.

The waterfront's a big place, though; it stretches from one end of the city all the way around the shoreline to the other. Some of the harbors moor fishing vessels, others serve only merchant ships, and a slew of privately owned and operated piers are home to everything from rich family yachts to merchant fleets. At either end of the waterfront, though, are piers belonging to the Palanthian Navy.

The Navy Yards

If there has *ever* been a larger, better-organized fleet than the Palanthian Navy, then I've never heard of it; there certainly isn't anything to compare with it afloat today.

The Navy began, I'm told, in the days following the first Cataclysm, when Palanthis was the only deep-water port left undamaged. This was the perfect chance for the city to take its position as an important trading port and improve it, so that it was *the* trading port—the one that every captain *had* to visit if a trip were to be profitable. However, the Lord of Palanthis figured that other, less-scrupulous people might come to the same conclusion. He feared that pirates or the merchants themselves might try to choke Palanthian commerce in hopes of stealing control of the city away from the Lord and the Senate. He came up with a solution both marvelous and devious, but best of all—it worked!



Narrators and the Waterfront

The Palanthian Navy consists of more than a hundred ships of varying size from caravels to great galleys, and the crews consist of sailors from every nation and race in Ansalon. In essence, Narrators can present the Navy in any way they require for a specific scenario.

Bahal Villem served aboard his first ship at the age of ten. In his time he has sailed on nearly every type of vessel known, including five years as a crewman on a minotaur schooner. When the Lord of Palanthas offered him a position in the Palanthian Navy, he grabbed it. A strange combination of politics and circumstance led to Bahal being promoted to admiral shortly after the Dark Knights were driven from Palanthas following the Second Cataclysm. He noted that, during their short reign, the Navy remained nearly unaffected by the land-based political maneuverings. Besides that, he learned on the minotaur ship to respect a strong leader. So, when the Dark Knights seized control again, he gladly reached an understanding with them.

♣ **Bahal Villem, Admiral of the Palanthian Navy:** *Human middle-aged male, commanding demeanor, Master. Co 6, Ph 7, In 7, Es 5, Dmg +7 (long sword), Def -3 (chain).*

Padull Grimpate has been Harbormaster for more than fifty years, and he considers the harbor to be his personal estate. No one and nothing docks in the harbor or on the pier without Padull's permission. Luckily, food or drink easily placates him (since he rarely leaves the harbor long enough for a decent meal), and he's not above accepting a good old-fashioned bribe.

♣ **Padull Grimpate, Harbormaster of Palanthas:** *Neidar dwarf adult male, cantankerous demeanor, Master. Co 5, Ph 7, In 5, Es 6, Dmg +7 (billhook), Def -3 (chain).*

While the heroes have probably never heard of him, Shaun "Copper" Driftwood is a legend among sailors and harbormasters. In his youth he sailed everywhere, never refusing a position on a ship, and always honoring a contract. What's more, the old man is almost universally loved; no one has more friends than Copper Driftwood, and that makes him a good man to know. He's retired now and spends most of his time on Blue Crab Pier, but there is no better source of reliable scuttlebutt than Copper.


♣ **Shaun "Copper" Driftwood:** *Human elder male, simple demeanor, Legend. Co 6, Ph 5, In 7, Es 7, Dmg +1 (belaying pin), Def 0 (common clothing).*

Story Seeds

♣ In a tale where the heroes belong to the crew of a merchant vessel, they pull into Palanthas Harbor only to be boarded by a representative of the Palanthian Navy. The representative tells their captain that in order to dock, he or she must provide the Navy with several new recruits. Though disgruntled, the cap-

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Any merchant who planned to anchor more than six times per year in Palanthas Harbor had to provide support for the new Palanthas Navy. Some merchants provided ships, others crewed them, but together they cobbled together a fleet to rival any of their own. These ships patrolled the harbor and provided

escorts for merchants sailing through unfriendly waters. Everyone considered the Navy an overwhelming success.

After a few years of this, the Lord tendered an offer to the captains, crews, and owners of these ships: Leave your merchant employers and join the Navy, and we'll double your pay.

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tain really has no choice, and he or she selects the heroes. Will they go? If not, will they flee or fight? Ambitious Narrators can use this as the opening segment of a Naval campaign.

- ✧ The heroes track a foe to a ship anchored in the Public Harbor. The Harbor-master does not allow them access to the ship and threatens to call the City Guard if they so much as set foot on his pier. How will the heroes get around this bureaucratic dwarf? And if they do, what will the reaction be if their battle does any damage to the pier or other ships anchored there? The City Guard, Palanthian Navy, and other affected parties will not take such actions lightly.
- ✧ Members of the City Guard approach the heroes in some other section of town and insist that they come down to the waterfront. There, they lead the heroes to a leaky merchant barge and tell them that it is their responsibility. It seems the captain of the barge sailed in that morning and told the Harbormaster that he had been paid to deliver this boat to the heroes (or perhaps one particular hero). On top of that, the man knew where the heroes (or hero) would be found. Now he washes his hands of the whole affair. The captain seemed somehow spooked and afraid to go back on the ship. The guards tell the heroes they have to get the barge out of port by sundown, but first they want to inspect the ship for contraband (for which the heroes will be held liable). What is going on here? Who sent the barge? What is it carrying? And what had the captain so scared? But most of all, what will the heroes do with this rickety old thing?
- ✧ The heroes arrive in Palanthas after an arduous sea journey. However, all the Port Authority sites on the waterfront are closed. It is illegal to enter the city without papers, but no one is around to issue them. Will the heroes risk being caught without identification, or will they wait patiently for Knights who do not seem to be returning? And why are the Knights gone anyway?
- ✧ Around the waterfront, rumors circulate about a terrible fight that broke out at Home Brew. Some gnomes from Mount Nevermind, it seems, came to the distillery claiming that Flashfire and Gröed stole the recipe from them. What's more, despite its delicious taste, the compound serves as a very dangerous fuel for a nearly completed gnome contraption, and it is very dangerous to drink. Anyone who does so could, the gnomes say, spontaneously combust. Everyone laughs at the idea, but in the next few days, sailors do indeed begin to burst into flames for no apparent reason. The City Guard shuts down the distillery until they can find answers. Sailors and other whiskey lovers threaten to riot. What is the truth in this strange set of circumstances? Can the heroes set things right before the waterfront either burns down or erupts into violence over this whiskey embargo?



Merchant Barges

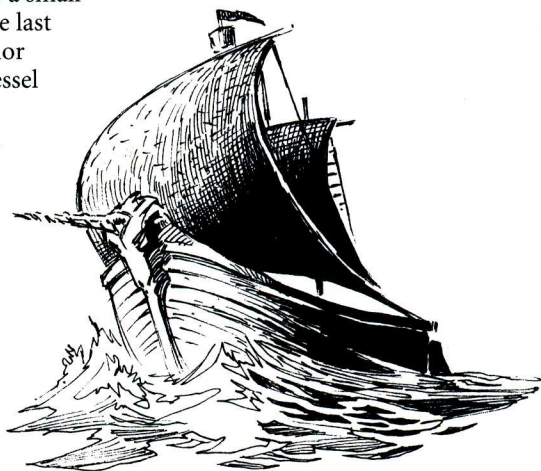
See these small piers set low in the water? It's toward the end of the day, so they're empty now, but each morning merchants tie barges off these piers—barges full of merchandise—and rather than carting it into the market, sell their wares straight off the boat.

In most cases these fishmongers or farmers come from near the bay's head. Sometimes, though, you find something really interesting, like a barge full of scrap metal, or one selling clothing, or a floating restaurant. I've even heard that a captain will sail an empty barge to the pier with the intention of selling the ship itself occasionally. (To the best of my knowledge, this has never worked.)

Blue Crab Pier

If I think of any place on Krynn as home, it's this pier. I've sailed into every harbor from Port Balifor to Port o'Call, and every one in-between, but this is the only one where I've felt I belonged. Don't ask me why. I don't know. But if you ever come looking for me, your best bet is right here.

A lot happens on this pier. Skiffs from the ships anchored farther out in the harbor bring crew members to start their



Needless to say, this plan worked as well as the first. And the Lord of Palanthis needed only a small increase in the docking fees to pay for the whole thing.

From time to time, the city went back to the merchants and demanded support for increases or improvements in the Navy, which they had no real choice but to pay. Eventually the Navy had such a historic reputation that many young sailors chose the sea life with hopes of one day being recruited for the Palanthis fleet.

The taking of Palanthis by the Dark Knights revealed a strange twist in the annals of military history. Because the Navy swears allegiance to the city of Palanthis rather than a country or a leader, when the Lord Knight came to the newly promoted Admiral Villem and asked him to see to the defense of the city, the young officer agreed. To him, and I dare say to most of the sailors, what happened on the land mattered little as long as the harbor stayed active.

Today the Navy does the same job it has for centuries: It keeps the Palanthisian harbor safe from anyone or anything that threatens its supremacy.

The Public Harbor

Along the eastern edge of the waterfront is a large pier with dozens of small moorings in and around it. This is the Palanthis Public Harbor, and for a small fee (five silver pieces per week the last time I checked) anyone can anchor any vessel there, so long as the vessel isn't *currently* engaged in commerce. I've seen everything from a shipping crate with a name painted on the "bow" to a minotaur light-armored cog anchored at the harbor, and I expect to see stranger things before my days are done. It's amazing to me what some folks will put to sea in.



shore leave here. Likewise, every major voyage begins from this point.

The pier gets its name from the odd little crabs that you can see clinging to the pylons at low tide. No one knows where they come from; you can't find them in any other harbor anywhere. Every day, though, more of them seem to cling to the pylons. At first they appeared only here, but now you can see them on every pier in the harbor, and some bold little buggers have even begun crawling up the hulls of ships and into the cargo bays.

Some folks look at the color of their shells, just about the same as a blue dragon's scales, and say that they're a plague laid on Palanthis by Skie. That's ridiculous, though. Through the Dark Knights, the Blue already owns Palanthis; if he wanted us dead, he wouldn't need a plague of crabs to do it for him.

The Port Authority

Once you get off your boat and onto dry land, you need to visit one of the Port Authority offices scattered across the waterfront. This is very important because only these offices, which can be as small as a boathouse or take up an entire floor of a warehouse, issue the identification papers a sailor should carry to get by in Palanthis.

There's an office just across the way from Blue Crab Pier, manned by no fewer than five Knights at all times. Three of them make sure that no one tries to head into town without stopping by the office, and two interview and make up papers for the arriving sailors. Not the most efficient set up, but who am I to argue with the representatives of the Lord Knight?

During particularly busy seasons, the Knights often simply set up a table at the pier's end and allow nobody to enter the waterfront proper without being processed.

The other purpose these Knights serve is to search for contraband. With the restrictions Lord Kinsaid has decreed, they sometimes collect a whole roomful of knives, scrolls, brooches, spyglasses, and other trinkets in half a day. If you have any item you simply cannot part with, I suggest you leave it onboard your ship, because should the Knights take a shine to it, you'll never see it again. It's unwise to argue with them because, no matter how correct you are, the chances are good that you'll wind up in the Palanthas Jail and they will have your possession anyway. What they do with this booty, I have no idea.

Home Brew

One thing every seafaring man and woman loves: a nip of whiskey. Now, I'm not saying we're all lushes. It's just that the drink serves so many purposes at sea that we find even the smell of it . . . comforting, somehow. If we seafaring folk can come to any consensus at all on the subject, it's that a little distillery right here on the waterfront makes the best whiskey in all of Ansalon.

Home Brew is the name of the business and the bottle, but the taste is nothing like what you'd get if you made your own drink. This beautiful liquid goes down smooth as the sea in summer. It warms a chill night, calms your nerves so you can sleep during a gale, and just tastes so clean that you wish you could bathe in it.

A very unlikely pair (a centaur from Duntollik and an ogre from Kern) came to Palanthas for the sole purpose of distilling and selling whiskey. The recipe came from Flashfire (he's the centaur), and Gröed (the ogre) tasted it during a trading session between their tribes. Being an ogre of the world, or at least one who'd been to Palanthas, he talked Flashfire into this risky venture, and thank the gods he did. You can get Home Brew in fifths, pints, and jugs, but I find it best enjoyed by the single glassful. Savor this nectar, as you'll not taste it like again.

The Sewers

Do you hear that—the sound of running water? That sound comes from the drainage pipes emptying street runoff into the bay.

What drainage pipes? Didn't you know that Palanthas stands over a great maze of tunnels and sewers? I thought for sure Bertrem would have shown you schematic drawings of the system. He's terribly proud that Palanthas has them; no other city he's ever heard of does. They help keep the city's streets from flooding, especially in the spring when water is constantly flowing down from the mountains all around.

The funny thing is, no one knows for sure who built them. Folks exploring the tunnels made the maps in the Library, not the builders. As far as anyone knows, the tunnels have been here since before the first ships sailed through the Gates of Paladine; and looking at the tunnels, I don't find that hard to believe.

Oh, I've been down there once or twice, usually when I've been too drunk to know what's good for me. The tunnels are all sunk at least twenty feet below the streets of the city, and they can be anywhere from thirty feet tall to just large enough for a kender to crawl through. Some of them are nothing more than raw stone, slowly changing shape over the years because of the thousands of waves of water that roll over them. But most of the passages are made out of baked clay bricks unlike anything I've ever seen. Most of them are teal blue in color (though it's sometimes hard to tell because of the fungus and moss growing on them), and some of the bricks even have carvings on them, though not in any language that the scholars recognize.

Whoever built the damned things was quite ambitious. They run under nearly every inch of the Old City and quite a bit of the New City as well. You can get into them through grates set in the major roads, mostly where they cross one another; I've heard that some of the



older buildings have grates in them too, though I personally would never want to find the one that leads to the Tower of High Sorcery. Some say one such grate leads into a dark room filled with gibbering things, but I don't put any stock in stories like that. Mostly. Anyway, if a grate isn't rusted shut, you can lift it and climb down an iron ladder into the













slimy bowels of the city—not that I recommend it.

The tunnels are foul-smelling, muck-encrusted places during the dry seasons, and raging rivers that can sweep a body away if you don't find something sturdy to hold on to in the spring. In particularly wet years, I've seen the grates overflow and flood the Trade Exchange.

Narrators and the Sewers

Heroes who go ill prepared into the sewers have only themselves to blame for the consequences. Finding a way to anywhere specific (including a place the heroes have already passed through) in this labyrinth without a map is a *desperate Perception* action. If the heroes have torches, this action becomes merely *daunting*. Also, if they clearly mark their way as they proceed, their action is only a *challenging Perception* action. Members of the Thieves' Guild, or anyone who can read the Guild's codex (see page 81), however can move freely about the sewers by reading the markings engraved at every tunnel junction.

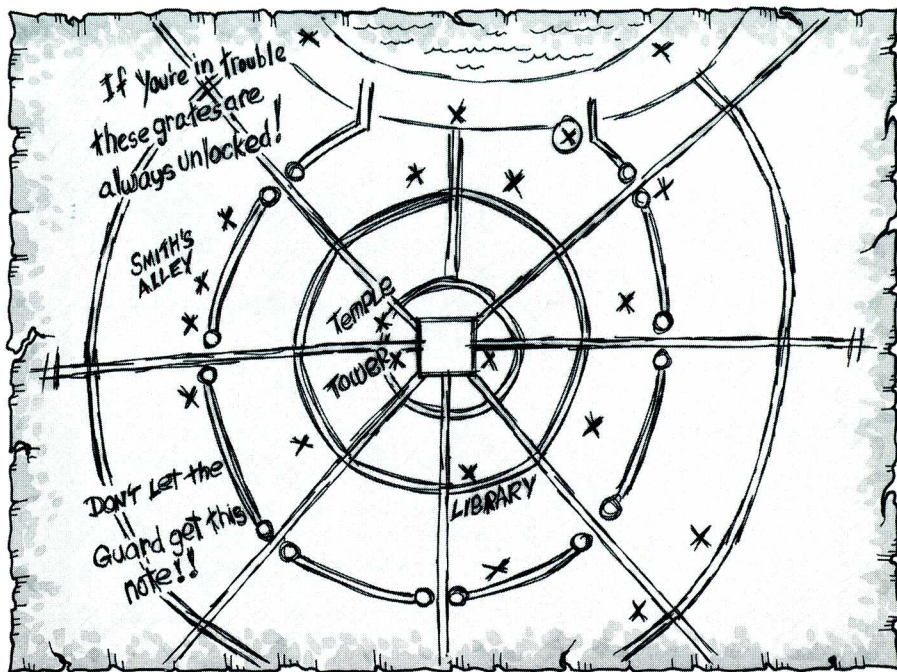
Since the tunnels run throughout the city, Narrators should feel free to design them as best suits their vision, either mapping out the entire system before beginning play or using a random method of determining where each corridor goes. One such method is to flip the top card of the Fate Deck and consult the following chart.

Suit	Result
	Long, straight tunnel
	T-intersection
	Dead-end
	4-way intersection
	20' waterfall
	Bottomless pit
	Ladder to surface*
	Water-filled pit
 (1–2)	Sewer Denizens**
 (3–4)	The Pits**
 (5–7)	The Catacombs**
 (8+)	Sewer Monsters**

* Flip the next card of the Fate Deck. If its aura is red or black, the grating is rusted closed, and the heroes must succeed at a *daunting Strength* action in order to open it.

** See below for sections on these results.

Narrators may stock the corridors of the sewers with whatever creatures they choose. *The Bestiary* provides an exhaustive list of Ansalonian creatures plus a habitat guide. (The sewers are quite similar to the swamp habitat.) Otherwise, consult Chapter Six of the *Book of the Fifth Age* in the *DRAGONLANCE: FIFTH AGE* boxed set.



If your sense of adventure overcomes your common sense, and you feel you must go into the sewers, be sure to bring torches (or better yet, lanterns) and some way to mark your path. With all the twists and turns those tunnels make, you can get lost faster than a stowaway kender in a ship's hold.

Sewer Denizens

Who can say exactly what creatures live in the sewer? I know I've seen spiders the size of my head and snakes longer than the bodies of three men. Ask in any tavern along the waterfront, and you'll hear all sorts of wild tales about these tunnels. Some say that crocodiles swim through the waters. Others tell tales of packs of wild dogs hunting anyone foolish enough to wander into their territory. The story I put the least faith in is that a hatchling black dragon nests somewhere below the city. Still, I'm not going down there to prove the story wrong.

The Pits

Throughout the sewers are pits that go down farther than my old eyes can see—as far as I know, they *have* no bottoms. What purpose they serve, I don't know, but you can sometimes hear desperate and pitiful cries echoing from their depths.

Getting around the pits is fairly easy if you're sly; a foot-wide ledge runs around the pits. Just be very careful when crossing it, because you usually can't find anything to grab onto to stop yourself from falling if you slip.

Some of the pits must have bottoms because every once in a while you come across one that's filled with water. Usually you find it by stepping where you think the floor should be and finding yourself swimming in putrid water.

I hear that some of these pools are homes to strange, man-eating creatures with glowing eyes and the bodies of snakes. You can see the eyes floating below the surface if you bother to look, or so I'm told.





Locations within the Sewers

The following text details various locations within the sewers for Narrators.

The Pits

Walking along the ledge of a pit is a *challenging Agility* action. A normal failure means that the hero goes sprawling face down in the muck on the other side. Those unlucky enough to have a mishap find that their heroes have lost their balance and fall into the pit unless one of the other heroes succeeds at a *challenging Dexterity* action to grab on to a sleeve or limb.

Individual Narrators can decide the depth of a particular pit.

The Catacombs

Heroes may encounter any kind of undead creature in the catacombs, but skeletons, wights, ghosts, and haunts are most common. The creatures usually rise up only to chase the living out of a burial site, but occasionally a group of undead refuses to lie back down to their eternal rest and wander through the sewers looking for victims.

Sewer Monsters

The sewer monsters are, in fact, the remnants of a renegade band of draconians who have been living in the sewers for fifty years. Originally, more than twenty of them lived there, but life is hard in these tunnels, and only eight of them remain: one Aurak and seven Baaz.

Because they deserted the Blue Dragonarmy, they are afraid to let the Dark Knights know they are down here and try to kill anyone who sees them. If, however, the heroes can convince them that they are enemies of the Knights, the draconians become much more hospitable.

- § **Aurak:** *Draconian*. Co 12, Ph 14, In 8 (64), Es 8, Dmg +10, Def -5, also acute sense (vision), alteration (self), breath attack (blind), charm, death throes, missile weapon (energy blast), resistant to magic, sorcery (pyromancy, electromancy, divination), and summoning (self).
- § **Eight Baaz:** *Draconians*. Co 8, Ph 6, In 6, Es 7, Dmg +6, Def -3, also death throes, glide, and pounce.

Story Seeds

- § The odd creature described above is a water naga that crawled into the sewers a number of years ago. Nagas usually live in fresh water, though, and the foul water of the sewers has slowly poisoned this once-intelligent creature, driving it insane. It swims from pit to pit eating rats and other sewer denizens, but it hungers for something more substantial—like a hero.

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♣ **Water naga:** *Monster.* Co 5, Ph 24, In 1, Es 6, Dmg +2, Def -3, also poison (bite), swimming, and sorcery (aeromancy, cryomancy, hydro-mancy).

♣ While traipsing through the sewers, the heroes come across a panicked thief running with a jewel-encrusted crown under his arm. Just then, a group of skeletons rounds the corner and moan, "Return the crown!" The fool stole a crown from the corpse of the leader of the former sewer dwellers, and every undead creature in the tunnels is out for his head. He's been trying to put it back, but so far he hasn't found the room he took it from.

Any hero who touches the crown becomes, in the minds of the undead creatures, an accomplice and is hunted down just like the thief himself. These monsters block every exit from the sewers, and if the heroes still manage to escape, even follow them above ground to seek their unholy revenge. Can the heroes find the proper room before they're overwhelmed by the hordes of the undead? And what prompted the thief to come down into the sewers anyway?

The Catacombs

It's clear that someone lived in these sewers at one time or another in Palanthas's past. I say this because here and there you'll find nooks dug out of the earth, some of which even have crude tables and chairs. Who made these, when, and why are questions I don't think we'll ever discover answers for. But if any answers can be found, they'll be in one of the burial chambers scattered throughout the sewers.

These catacombs each hold ten or twenty corpses laid out with royal reverence. They were clearly important people in life and should be left in the state they're in out of respect for the dead. If that's not a good enough reason for you, I've heard too many tales of skeletons, ghosts, and other beasties guarding the catacombs. Anger them at your own peril.

Sewer Monsters

Of all the stories I know about these sewers, the most disturbing ones concern the sewer monsters. A strange race of creatures here walk like men but have skin as tough as chainmail. They growl

like dogs and hiss like snakes, and come from the Abyss or some place not of Krynn. I know, because I've seen them myself.

Ugly beasties they were, with long snouts and sharp teeth. One or two of them seemed to have wings, but they didn't fly, at least not for the few seconds I was around. They swung terrible spiked maces and howled at me to leave their home, which I did as fast as my legs would carry me. Some folks I've told this story to claim that they're draconians, but what would draconians be doing hiding in the sewers? Besides, I've seen draconians, and these didn't look like the ones I saw. They were similar, but not the same.

Every once in a while I hear stories of the sewer monsters venturing out into the world above, probably to steal babies or slake their murderous thirsts. If you ever see them, don't waste any thoughts on trying to kill them. I hear they are powerful sorcerers and can turn a body to stone with one touch!





The Thieves' Guild

Well, it's time to head back up to the surface and . . . No! . . . Don't go through *that* grating . . . Of all the gratings to go through, you picked the one that leads to the Guild Hall of the Palanthas Thieves' Guild. This is the oldest guild in the entire city, and you should know that these chaps are proud of that, even if they have to keep their membership secret. They may look like a motley crew of robbers, cutpurses, and looters, but that's just because they *are*. That doesn't make them bad people, though.

Members of the Thieves' Guild work according to a very strict code of ethics that doesn't allow them to steal from anyone who can't afford it. What's more, they help the poorest sections of the community in ways no one else does. They provide food for the destitute and teach skills to needy—thieving skills to be sure, but skills that will put food on the table and a roof over the head.

See that Ergothian up on the dais? He's Daavyd Nelgard, the Guildmaster—came in here after the Dark Knights hung his predecessor and threatened to wipe the Guild from the city. Well, here it is thirty years later and the Guild is as strong as it's ever been.

Next to him is Rindia Rolanta, a Legionnaire who's also signed on as a guildmember. I've never seen a more skilled spy than Rindia, but she's a bit wild and makes grandiose plans. Her big idea is to kill Sir Kinsaid, but I don't see what good that'll do. He may be Lord Knight, but the Dark Knights won't fall apart without him. I think she was soft on old Lynched Geoffrey (the former Guildmaster), but I haven't had the guts to say it to her face.

Me? No, I'm no guildmember—just a trusted friend. The Guild knows that it can't keep to itself; if they didn't have the support of the people, the Dark Knights'd have closed them down long ago. They open their organization to people they know won't sell them out, and that's the only reason you're still alive. If you weren't with me they'd have killed you on the spot the second you came through that grating. Because I sponsored you, you'll have a chance to prove your trust by taking the Test of Valor.

It's really quite easy. Go stand over against that wall and hold *very* still. These fine folk are going to throw some knives at you. If you cry out or flinch, well, you're not made of stern enough stuff to keep the Guild's secrets, and the next knife's going straight for your brain. Don't worry, they hardly ever miss.

Personalities of the Thieves' Guild

In the wake of the hanging of the former Guildmaster, Daavyd came to Palanthas from Northern Ergoth to help the Guild defy the Dark Knight oppressors and lead the Guild into a profitable future.

- ❖ **Daavyd Nelgard, Guildmaster of the Palanthas Thieves' Guild:** *Human adult male, motivated demeanor, Champion.* Co 11, Ph 6, In 7, Es 8, Dmg +1 (garrote) or +5 (scimitar), Def -2 (leather).

Rindia serves as the liaison between the Palanthian Legion of Steel Cell and the Thieves' Guild. She is uncertain which group she feels more attached to and hopes nobody ever forces this issue.

- ❖ **Rindia Rolanta, a Legionnaire:** *Human elder female, cynical (confident)* demeanor, Adventurer.* Co 8, Ph 8, In 5, Es 5, Dmg +7 (longsword), Def -3 (chain).

* Rindia's true demeanor is in parenthesis.

New Role: Palanthas Thieves' Guild Member

There is honor among thieves, and the members of the Palanthas Thieves' Guild have proven themselves time and again to be protectors of the city in times of trouble. When there is no threat, though, they go back to what they do best: separating hard-working folk from their hard-earned steel.

Roleplaying

Members of the Thieves' Guild come in all shapes, sizes, and temperaments. About the only thing they share is a hatred of the Dark Knights who rule Palanthas and an oath to uphold the following ideals:

- ☛ Practice one's craft honorably.
- ☛ Steal only from those who have more than they need.
- ☛ Harm only those who would harm you or the defenseless.
- ☛ Defy the Lord Knight and his regime.

Requirements

Members of the Thieves' Guild must be highly trained in the arts of "equalizing wealth." Heroes must have codes of "B" or higher in at least two of the following: Dexterity, Reason, or Perception.

Heroes with the proper connections can acquire this role during play no matter what their ability codes, but they must train diligently and are not considered full guildmembers until they meet the above requirements.

Whether the role is chosen during hero creation or acquired during play, the hero's nature *must* originate from a card with a value of 5 or less. They must also have a wealth of 4 to 6.

Advantages

Guildmembers receive automatic trump bonuses when performing thieflike actions based on Dexterity, Reason, or Perception. They also know two special languages: Hand talk, a way of communicating through gestures alone, and Codex, the strange series of shapes and icons that the Guild has marked on the walls of the sewer tunnels.


Disadvantages

Because of their adversarial relationship with the Lord Knight, heroes with this role often feel compelled to embarrass Dark Knights whenever they see them. An *average Reason (Presence)* action must be attempted each time the heroes encounter a Knight in public. If the action fails, the hero *must* do something designed to mortify the Knight, no matter the risk of capture. The other disadvantage is that, should the hero be captured and his or her connection to the Guild be discovered, he or she will be hanged immediately.





CHAPTER FIVE



With shrieks and yells, the blaring of horns, and clashing of shield and sword, the dragonarmies struck the Tower of the High Clerist as the sun's brittle light filled the sky. By nightfall, the flag still flew. The Tower stood.

But half its defenders were dead.

—The battle of the High Clerist's Tower, Dragons of Winter Night

You're not ready to sit down on ol' Copper, are you? We've some places yet to visit! Come along, now.

Palanthas may be a lonely city sitting on the edge of nowhere, but it hardly exists in a bubble. We're so dependent on goods and services from more hospitable regions that, if anything, we're more closely tied to our neighbors than any other city I've ever visited.

The city sits smack in the middle of a Dragon Realm, and though Skie usually has his head buried in his dark plots, we know that he could sweep out of the blue and destroy us with almost no warning. Only two ways lead out of Palanthas, and neither one of them is terribly fast.

The Bay of Branchala

For those of us who make our livings on the sea, the Bay of Branchala is as much a part of Palanthas as the Old City. After all, no ship sails on the bay unless it's headed for Palanthas Harbor.

The bay itself is a deep water inlet of the Turbidus Ocean and is subject to the tides, swells, and storms as the rest of the northern coastline. But its small mouth lies just behind a great reef that

shelters the bay from the worst of these events. Though the reef makes the mouth of the bay rough and sometimes dangerous, the waters beyond that are usually calm and clear, making it an extraordinary trip indeed when any trouble befalls a ship within sight of the towers of the city.

This is also one of the prettiest stretches of water I've sailed, but my tastes are a bit slanted since I live in Palanthas. Still, from the time you pass through Paladine's Gates (the narrow entrance to the bay) until you sail into the harbor, you're treated to a view of towering cliffs of the same white rock that the city is made from—only time and the weather have worn and stained the stone in colors so breathtaking that even a master painter could never hope to capture them all.

I've head some sailors say they feel trapped in the bay because of the mountains that loom over them, making even the tallest ship seem tiny and fragile. Though one or two trails wind from the clifftop down to the water's edge, for the most part these cliffs consist of sheer drops of five hundred feet or more to the water's surface, and at least that far again below the waves.

Branchala Bay is too deep to set crab traps in, but all kinds of deep water fish make their way into the bay. I heard tell of one poor sod who cast a line from the rocky shore and was pulled near out to sea by a twenty-foot sailfish. And a group of porpoises uses the bay as a coral for their favorite meals, chasing schools of mackerel and herring into the closed waters where they're easier to catch.

Palanthas Harbor

As if the reef at the bay's mouth didn't provide enough protection, Palanthas Harbor has an extensive breakwater built about a mile from the docks themselves. Towers that usually stand empty dot this

Narrators and the Bay of Branchala

The tides work on a twelve-hour schedule and shift by about an hour every day. In other words, if high tide is at highsun one day, it will be at about 1 P.M. the following day, and 2 P.M. the day after that. Narrators should use the tidal schedule as best befits their campaign styles. A loose, plot-driven game can have the tide going in or out at just the perfect moment, while a detail-oriented game may necessitate the Narrator figuring out every high and low tide for the heroes' entire time in Palanthas.

Story Seeds

- ❧ The heroes overhear a local fisherman telling how, having rowed his boat out to the middle of the bay, he pulled up a fish with a fist-sized ruby in its belly. Dockside pubs always buzz with rumors of a sunken pirate ship loaded with ill-gotten booty resting at the bottom of the Bay of Branchala—this fish may very well be the first proof that such a thing really exists. The next day, the bay is filled with people fishing, diving, and using all sorts of magical and mundane devices to plumb for the treasure. So many people are out on the water that merchant ships can no longer reach the harbor, threatening Palanthas's most important business—trade. Will the heroes join these aquatic prospectors, or will they help find a way to calm the treasure-hunting frenzy? For that matter, does a treasure really exist at all, or was the old man just telling a fish tale?
- ❧ The heroes, while aboard a ship in the harbor (either as guests or members of the crew) notice that a nearby ship is on fire. They don't know whether this is an accident or sabotage, but while the flames blaze it doesn't matter. One burning ship is a danger to everyone and everything in the harbor. The tide is coming in, so it will be very difficult to get the burning ship out of harm's way or evacuate the harbor. Just then, the winds pick up and begin blowing sparks and embers from the one ship toward several others. What will the heroes do to protect the ships in the harbor, particularly theirs? Is this an accidental blaze? If not, is it simple arson or a magical attack of some sort, and can it be put out through normal means?
- ❧ The heroes spy a tremendous sea cave along the western shore of the bay. Though hidden by some small islands, the cave is so big that they're sure a large ship could easily moor in its depths. This is the sea cave of Zeboim. A cult that worshiped the sea goddess built a temple in the tunnels behind the cave. However, these fanatics were all slain before the Chaos War. Though Palanthian fishermen know of the cave, they will not say anything other than that it's haunted and the heroes should stay away from it if they know what's good for them. Is this a threat? If the heroes explore the cave, is it empty? Or have pirates or a more sinister group made it their home?
- ❧ The heroes hear strange tales that every time a particular merchant ship, the *Reef Shark*, passes through the Gates of Paladine, a section of the cliff wall bursts into green flame, burns for ten minutes, then resumes its normal appearance. Some say that Jarek Reefcutter escaped the hangman's noose and

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low stone wall, but archers and mages can man them should the city expect trouble to come sailing down the bay. Another tactic the Navy takes to prevent unwanted visitors from reaching the harbor is to float barges into the gaps in the breakwater, then weigh them down with sacks of sand and mud. This may take a while to clean up after the emergency passes, but it does effectively make it impossible to get into or out of the harbor.

Since they anchor in the harbor which is at the very end of a tidal bay, ships wishing to leave the harbor are almost completely at the mercy of the tides. Since so many merchant craft come in and out of the harbor, the Navy and Port Authority have strict regulations prohibiting ships with crews larger than ten from sailing into Palanthas during low tide. Anyone sitting on a pier watching the rhythms of the harbor will notice that for twelve hours more ships come into the harbor than leave it. Then it

switches so that it seems every ship in Palanthas is leaving at once. It's a sight to see, let me tell you.

Other Sites

Most sailors will tell you that nothing of any interest lies along the cliffs that frame the Bay of Branchala. But take it from someone who grew up paddling a raft up and down the craggy coastline, more is there than anyone suspects.

All along the cliffs small outcroppings of rocks form barren islands which adventurous children can use in impromptu games of Lord of the Manor. And in quite a few spots the waves have worn the cliff away to create grottos and sea caves where no one on land or sea will think to look for a missing person or treasure. More than a few sailors I know hid their families there when the Dark Knights first marched on Palanthas.

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began a new life as the captain of the *Reef Shark*; the fire is a signal from his men, telling him that his treasure is safe and awaiting his return. Other rumors say that the *Reef Shark* is the one ship to ever escape the pirate captain's clutches, and his ghost, which haunts his secret treasure trove, explodes in fury whenever he sees the ship he could never catch. Is either of these stories true? Who or what lives in the cliffs, and what is causing this magical green flame? And, if the heroes eventually find Reefcutter's Jetty and go into the hills, do they discover any treasure at all?

The Sea Caves

When next you sail out of Palanthas, turn your spyglass on the base of the cliffs, where the waves lap and bounce back into the bay. Be patient and attentive, and you'll see small caves in the lull between waves. The repeated slapping of water against rock has hollowed out fantastic grottos, some of which are large enough to sail a fishing boat into.

What's in these caves? Nothing terribly interesting, unless people have put it there in the last twenty years or so. I spent a great deal of my youth exploring the sea caves and never found anything more exciting than fish that glowed with a pale yellow light. Still, should you feel adventurous and decide to visit the caves yourself, make sure you're aware of the tide.

As the waters rise, many of the cave mouths become submerged, making it impossible to leave. More frighteningly, the low-ceilinged caves fill completely with the sea, and the incoming tide makes it so even the strongest swimmer can't possibly get through into open waters on one breath.

Reefcutter's Jetty

Palanthas has known her share of pirates. Depending on the Lord at the time, pirates have been anything from the most wanted criminals in the realm to members of the City Senate. The city was founded with a pirate's blessing, and some say it's ruled by the same likes now.

The most famous pirate I ever met was Jarek Reefcutter. He sailed the Bay of

Branchala in the days after the Blue Lady's War, ransacking merchant ships and leading the Palanthian Navy on a kender chase. The Dark Knights finally caught and hung Captain Reefcutter (so I suppose we can't say they've *never* done anything good for the city).

Near the eastern Gate of Paladine, you can find a jetty that Captain Reefcutter used to moor behind. The rocky finger led inland about a hundred yards, then turned into a natural staircase leading up the cliff face. I'm told that the pirate hid most of his treasure here, and I know that the Navy never found half of the booty he's said to have stolen. Maybe it's there, waiting for a soul who doesn't mind the bloodshed it caused just to come and claim the entire lot. I know I couldn't sleep at night if my hands ever spent one copper of that horde, though.

Westgate Pass

I can see that, interesting as it is, the city of Palanthas doesn't hold all the answers you seek. Not to worry; you haven't seen one other place yet—a place most folks think of as part of the city.

Sadly, though, ol' Copper isn't the one to take you there. These old legs would never make the journey. Luckily for you, I know just the person for the job. Don't be fooled by appearances, though. She may be a tiny strap of a lass, but she's got the heart of a dragon and the strength of men twice her size.

You mind her well, and stop in to see ol' Copper the next time you visit in Palanthas.





Narrators and Westgate Pass

The farmers in the hills surrounding Palanthas mostly grow leafy green vegetables and various tubers. They also raise goats, sheep, chickens, and pigs for sale to Palanthian butchers. They're quiet, retiring people who don't have much but are willing to help anyone in need. Many a hurt or weary traveler has found more generosity in these farmhouses than anyplace else in Ansalon.

The only daughter of a former Red-Robed mage, Abby had no one but her mother to talk to as a child. As a result, she never quite got the hang of being relaxed around others, and compensates with an outlandish set of mannerisms. Her mother, an absolute pacifist, did nothing to help Palanthas defend itself from invasion, and Abby has never forgiven her. In order to regain the family's honor, she's sworn to become a Solamnic Knight once the Order retakes Palanthas (something Abby is sure will happen any day now).

☞ **Abby:** *Half-elf adult female, eccentric demeanor, Adventurer.* Co 7, Ph 6, In 5, Es 8 (64), Dmg +4 (staff sling), Def -2 (leather), also mysticism (animism).

Khas

Khas is a Krynnish board game played with the same types and numbers of pieces as chess, but on a hexagonal field with each troop starting in opposing corners of the board.

Solamnians believe that Khas games reflect battles that are currently being fought somewhere in the world. Legends tell that great battles have been won or lost due to the results of a timely game of Khas.

Story Seeds

- ☞ A new flying insect attacks the crops of the local farmers. The bug is immune to all the pesticides known to the farmers and seems to be resistant to animism spells. If something isn't done, the farmers will lose their entire crop, and Palanthas will lose its supply of fresh vegetables. Can the heroes find a way to get rid of the insect in time? Where did the insect come from, and how did it develop such amazing natural defenses?
- ☞ As the heroes pass an abandoned mine, a dirt-smeared dwarf runs cheering out of the shaft holding a tremendous diamond. If the heroes look, jewels of all description line the walls. Certainly, this wasn't here before—too many people have been in and out of the mine to have missed such obvious riches. When they turn to ask the dwarf what's going on, he's gone—disappeared. The jewels remain and are easily plucked from the wall. What will the heroes do? Something is very wrong with that disappearing dwarf, but these riches are real. Where did they come from? Is there some spiritual price to pay for taking them?
- ☞ While staying at the Yarus inn, one of the heroes has an amazingly vivid dream about losing a game of Khas to Yarus himself. The next day the heroes hear that their home town is under attack by brigands, and the battle goes poorly for the town. For some reason, the ghost of Yarus has taken an interest

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in this battle, and is playing dream Khas with the heroes to determine its outcome. Yarus is a master player, and beating him requires a successful *desperate Reason* action. These matches will go on for five more nights. If the heroes manage to win even one of the dream matches, the brigands are driven away. If not, the brigands loot the town and burn it to the ground. Why did Yarus take such an interest in this minor battle? Will he do so again for a more important fight?

Getting Out of Palanthas

Hi and hullo, friend. M'name's Abbralla, but you can call me Abby. No last name, mama never needed one, so I don't see why I do. I'm gonna lead you 'cross the mountains (those are the Vingaards, in case you're wondering)—some of the most god-touched country in the world, I believe—and bring you to the High Clerist's Tower. Or what's left of it anyway. But first we have to get you out of the city.

The Dark Knights usually don't much mind letting folks out of Palanthas. It's getting back in that can be tough, *and* cost you a steel or five. Still, they get a little squirrely about folks who want to visit the Clerist's, so we best disguise you.

Put on this traveling robe and cinch the hood up over your head. I'll tell 'em you're my cousin come in from Tanith to help with the harvest. They know I live on a little farm in the hills, and they know mama (though they stay away from her since she turned one of them into a rabbit for an hour). They won't give us no trouble unless they're looking for a runaway or a Solamnic spy.

You're not a Knight of Solamnia, are you? That'd make things tough at the gatehouse, but I don't think I'd mind. I'd find some way to get you through. I'm a Knight, you know—or at least I plan to be. I just have to find a real one so I can be invited to become a squire. You have to be invited.

Well, pull up your hood and let's get this over with. We've got a long walk ahead of us.

You don't mind being frisked, do you?

The Knight's High Road

There, that wasn't so hard. Mama says they can't do nothing but bruise your bones as long as you don't let 'em near your heart. I'm not sure exactly what that means, but I think of it every time I'm frisked at the gatehouse.

We're gonna walk along the Knight's High Road. Should take us about a day or two, but you'll see plenty along the way. I grew up in these hills, so I can tell you anything you wanna know.

Technically, all this land is ruled by Skie. But the Blue can't be bothered with the mountains. He's more interested in the desert he's turned the plains into.

The road was built by Vinas Solamnus—well, not *by* Vinas Solamnus, but at his say so. It was just a trail before that, but still the only way into Palanthas without a boat. Vinas thought that made it worth building and worth guarding. I'm glad he did. It'd take weeks to hike to the city from mama's farm without the road. This is hill country. The Palanthians call these mountains, but the *real* mountains don't start 'til you get past Yarus.

Still, it gets kinda cool up here, at least compared to in the city. In winter, we even get snow—sometimes. At any rate, you'll be glad for that thick robe once the sun goes down.



Small Farms

Look over yonder. See those sheep? That's right, sheep. And lots and lots of goats, too.

That's Eli Dogged's farm. He has a good hundred sheep and goats grazing on these hills—sells their milk, cheese, and meat in the market twice a week.

Don't look so surprised. There're lots of farms up in these hills. Where do you think the city folks get their produce from? Only cabbage and carrots last long enough in a ship's hold to make sailing them in worthwhile. All the rest of their greens come from our farms. We can't grow *everything* they do down on the plains, but what we do grow we sure can sell a lot cheaper than folks that have to cart their crops through the mountains.

Usually we all sell our harvest to one merchant who takes it into town and sells it. We don't get the full price that way, but we also don't have to waste our time standin' in the market yelling, "Fresh eggs!" or somesuch.

Abandoned Mines

By midday we should reach the old iron mines. I don't know how long it's been since anyone found any ore in these hills, but no one's ever bothered to close off the mines. I hear that a crazy alchemist from Palanthas comes up here every once in a while and stays for a day or two. He always leaves empty-handed, but he comes back at least once a month. Some folks just never learn.

You can find other mines sprinkled throughout the hills. The dwarves just about tapped them all out 'way back when they were building Palanthas. Still, I sometimes hear about one of the neighbors digging a well and hitting a small patch o' silver or copper—enough to buy a new horse or the lumber to add a new room to the house, but nothing that could let a body live a life of leisure.



Yarus

We're gonna stop in Yarus for the night. Didn't know we had a town up here, did you? Well, it's not really much of a town when you come right down to it. Nothing is really here but a few taverns and the old tower.

The only reason Yarus is here is to sell food and a bed for the night to people traveling to Palanthas. Business used to be double what it is now, or so the old folks say, before the High Clerist's Tower fell.

Originally, there was nothing here but the tower. Back before the Cataclysm—the first one, that is—the Lord High Cleric Yarus lived there. He watched over some prisoner named Kurnos, although all he did was sit around and play Khas with the man, from what I can tell. To listen to the bards tell the tale at the local taverns, though, you'd think he was a Hero of the Lance.

Now, though, the tower's been made into an inn, and three taverns stand in its shadow. If not for the fact that the weather on these hills gets a mite nasty overnight, Yarus'd be nothing but a ruined old building.

The Tower of the High Clerist

Well, here we are. A long walk, but worth the trip, I think. Have you ever seen a tower so high? I swear it must go straight through the clouds. It used to look a lot prettier, though, before those Dark Knights knocked holes in the walls.

Vinas Solamnus had this whole thing built—well, all except that small building there. That's the Knights' Spur. And, really, it's not that small at all. It just looks that way standing next to the Tower. Anyway, Vinas built it to defend Palanthas.

I think it's pretty strange having a city's best defense more than a day's march away, but Palanthas is a strange city. Vinas figured that since you had to cross the Westgate Pass to reach Palan-

thas, protecting the pass was the easiest way to defend the city. I'm sure that the honorable founder of the Solamnuc Order never thought of it, but if anyone *did* get past the Tower, they'd find themselves strung out in a long line all the way north, which makes easy targets for the City Guard (or farmers like mama) to pick off.

This worked fine for a while. But after the Knights fell on hard times (when near everyone in the world blamed them for the Cataclysm) and no one guarded the pass, the people of Palanthas ponied up and built the Knights' Spur. It closed the pass off tight and gave the city full protection without having to hire enough guards to run the whole gigantic tower. I figure the poor Spur got its name because it looks so tiny next to the Tower—like a little nub on the back of a Knight's armored boot.

Anyway, Palanthas never fully manned the Tower, not during peace time. Through most of the War of the Lance, only a handful of soldiers stayed in the Spur. Of course, toward the end of the fighting, more came; mercenaries mostly, but quite a few Knights too. I'd say the place held near a quarter of the defenders it could when the Blue Dragonarmy marched up the plains. That wouldn't have been nearly enough defenders, but the Tower held a secret defense—dragontraps! I don't know what the secret of the traps was, but the bards say that only one of the dragons escaped with its life. Power like that'll win any battle.

Of course, the next time Palanthas came under attack, the Blue Lady was smarter and led her troops *over* the Tower in a flying citadel—ho! that must have been a sight to see! It's just like mama says: A fence is only proof against someone who's too dumb to climb.

The only time someone actually overran the tower happened just before the Chaos War. Now, we all *said* that nobody could successfully break past the Tower, but we knew different. The whims of the gods being what they are, no one can be





Narrators and the Tower of the High Clerist

A tribe of fifty gully dwarves has made its home permanently in the Tower. They've learned to bypass most of the traps on the lower levels and are quite good at avoiding visitors. If, however, the visitors are respectful and seem to have come to pay homage to the Solamnic Knights who fought so bravely here, the gully dwarves approach them with unrestrained curiosity. Any heroes who can stand to be surrounded by a throng of the smelly creatures and befriend them might convince the gully dwarves to tell them where some traps are (and how to disarm them) or to show them to specific rooms within the Tower (though the tribe never ventures higher than the eighth level).

Story Seeds

- ❧ As the heroes travel to Palanthas, they come to the High Clerist's Tower only to find the gates repaired, closed, and barred. Torches burn atop the wall, and lights can be seen inside the Tower itself. If the heroes get inside the compound, they find everything as it should be—barren and in various states of disrepair—but they hear the sound of footsteps coming from inside the Tower. Investigations reveal nothing. Throughout their stay, various parts of the complex (always parts far away from the heroes) look fixed up and inhabited, but upon closer inspection this always proves to be an illusion of some sort. What is going on? Is a spectramancer casting spells to fool the heroes, and to what end? Is the Tower haunted? If so, by whose ghost, and what does it need in order to be laid to rest?
- ❧ The Aesthetics at the Great Library have tried for years to locate the journal of Sir Alfred Markenin, the Lord of the Sword who died in the famous Battle of the High Clerist's Tower during the final days of the War of the Lance. However, the Aesthetics could not find the book in the libraries on the lower floors. Is the journal in one of the upper floor libraries? Is it in a secret compartment in the lower libraries? Is it there at all? If the heroes do locate it, what will they find written inside? And what other books will they come across along the way?
- ❧ While exploring the Tower, the heroes find that the gully dwarf tribe is following them. Actually, they're following one particular hero and staring at him or her in rapt awe. When pressed, they reveal (in typical gully dwarf fashion) that the hero looks just like a figure in one of the frescoes, which they take the heroes to see. Indeed, the resemblance is remarkable. More remarkable, though, is the fact that the Tower in the painting looks old and defeated—just as it does now—and the figure wears exactly the same clothing the hero does. Disturbingly, the figure in the fresco has just been struck down by a mysterious figure wielding a black sword. The gully dwarves then bring out a black sword that they found in a room on a higher floor. Is this merely a coincidence or is it a prophecy? Who is the mysterious figure and what is the significance of the black sword?
- ❧ As they approach the Knights' Spur, the heroes see that the portcullises have been ripped from the walls of the aqueduct. Since the gates are open, the heroes see no obvious reason for this destruction—unless whatever did it couldn't leave the water. The agent of this destruction seems to have headed

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a hundred percent sure of defending a fort successfully. But no one ever thought that the Tower of the High Clerist could fall in one day! That's what happened, though. And then the Dark Knights marched into Palanthas. Of course, then when those horrible chaos creatures came 'round, the Dark Knights got whipped real good, too.

The place has stood empty ever since. Skie keeps a tight rein on his land, so I don't see any real chance of anyone coming at the city through the pass. I think the Dark Knights get some kind of mean-spirited joy out of knowing that the Tower just lies here, battered and beaten. I guess it symbolizes the defeat they handed the Solamnics. I'll be the happiest woman on Krynn the day the Solamnic Knights come back to the Tower and reclaims it in Paladine's name. And that day will come—mark my words.

The Battlements

The Tower's ringed by an eight-sided wall that's got to stand more than a hundred feet tall. Just look at how steep and smooth the walls are. Even with no one shooting arrows at you, I can't see any way you're gonna climb *these* walls! Each face has a guard-tower at either end, and a giant ironwood gate set in the middle. If you go through the gate, you enter a courtyard that surrounds the Tower, and you have to go inside on the main floor. The walls have bridges that lead into the Tower on the fourth floor.

I've spent an awful lot of time just poking around this place, but my favorite spot has got to be on top of the wall. Looking out over the plains, I can imagine what it must have been like to watch the Dragonarmy coming across the Wings of Habbakuk, which is that flatland just below here. I'm pretty sure that this spot here is where Sturm Brightblade fell for the final time—at least, I like to imagine that this stain on



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upstream into the mountains. What monster caused all this destruction? Or perhaps a normal creature did this, but why? Will the heroes have to hunt for the vandal, or will he, she, or it be waiting for them along the Westgate Pass?

- ✎ At the High Clerist's Tower, the heroes run into a group of battered and bloodied merchants who tell a terrible story about their caravan being attacked about a half-day's ride down the road. They describe tentacles rising out of the sand and indiscriminately grabbing guards, horses, and wagons and dragging them all beneath the desert floor. If the heroes go to investigate, the merchants close and bar the doors of the Spur behind them, giggling all the while. What is the monster out in the desert? Or is there one at all? Why were the merchants laughing as they locked the gate? Are they just happy to be safe, or have they somehow set up the heroes for a terrible fate?

the ground is his blood, and not some strange pattern in the rock itself. He's buried in the Chamber of Paladine down below the Tower, along with all the other Knights who died that day.

The Tower

Let's light some torches and walk into the Tower.

See the way the walls slant back—kinda like teeth? Well that's all part of its beauty. Do you know what the Tower was originally called? Dragondeath! I've heard that the design came to some early Solamnian clerics in a dream. They saw what it would be used for, they even saw when, and Vinas Solamnus had the place built based on his faith in these visions.

This central room goes up five levels, and the Evil dragons died here—but I can't quite figure out how. Sometimes I just sit in here 'til my torch starts to flicker and try to sort it out. Maybe after I become a Knight they'll tell me.

Well, we could walk around this level all day, but—hey! Get out of here, ya pests! Gully dwarves! They get into everything! I don't know why this tribe decided to stay here, but they're the only ones living in the tower anymore. They don't seem to hurt anything, but I don't much like finding them in here.

Anyway, this floor has lots of interesting things: a library (the books are all

written in Old Solamnian, though), lots of rooms that the officers probably lived in, jail cells, a grand hall (covered with wonderful paintings of the days of Knightly glory), and even a couple of pits—so be careful. But things get really interesting as we start going upstairs.

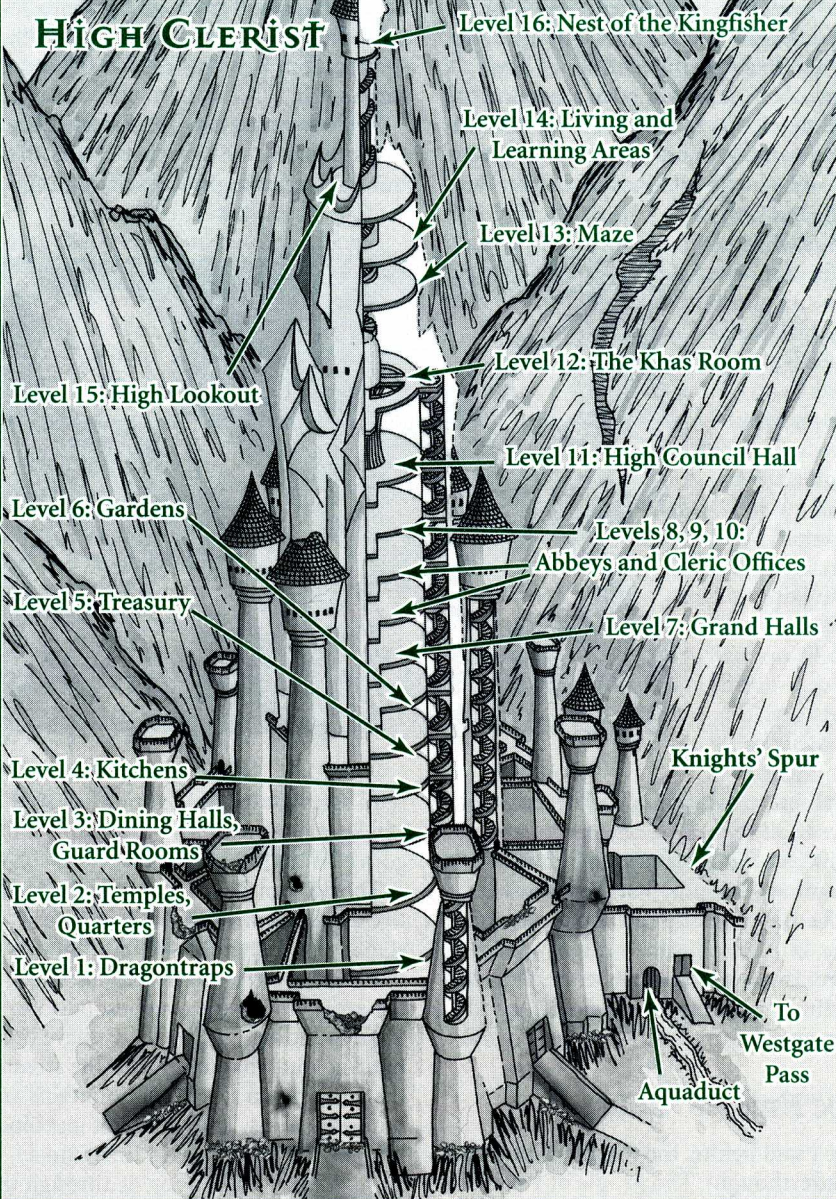
The Tower has sixteen levels—only sixteen! With a building this tall, that means *a lot* of stairs. Lucky for us, the first ten or so floors are right near the bottom.

I've never gone higher than the fifth floor myself, but I've found all kinds of interesting things, and I still haven't seen it all. I can't imagine what this Tower was like when it was full. We could find mazes, rooms full of mirrors, chapels, barracks, kitchens, indoor gardens, and treasuries, and armories (though looters have gotten away with just about everything that was left behind on these lower floors).

Sounds like a lot of fun to explore, right? Not necessarily. The trouble is, traps are everywhere. Not just traps left to guard items; traps built into the Tower so that anyone who doesn't know where to step might be dropped into open pits or even crushed by blocks of stone. I decided to stop exploring when a giant ball of stone almost ran over me in one of the stairwells!

Add to that the fact that the place is haunted—some are nice spirits of dead

THE TOWER OF THE HIGH CLERIST



Knights, others're just plain ornery ghosts—and all manner of beasts have made their nests here (I once walked into a room filled almost floor to ceiling with bats!). Anyone without a *really* good reason to be here will turn back.

If you believe everything you hear, no one's been above the tenth floor since before the Chaos War—well, not and lived to tell about it. Rumors say that all those rooms remain exactly as they were left—filled with all kinds of artifacts and such, and who knows what kinds of monsters and ghosts. This place used to be an abbey as much as a fort, and you know how those religious folks get about protecting their sacred places.

Anyone hardy enough to hike up to the very top levels gets a view that can't

be matched anywhere, or so I'm told. They say you can see all the way to the ocean, and at night you can even see the lights of Palanthas. Imagine that! You can see farther than a body can walk in two days. But I also hear it's mighty cold up there. If you're foolhardy enough to try to climb the stairs, bring cloaks that'd keep you warm through a harsh winter.

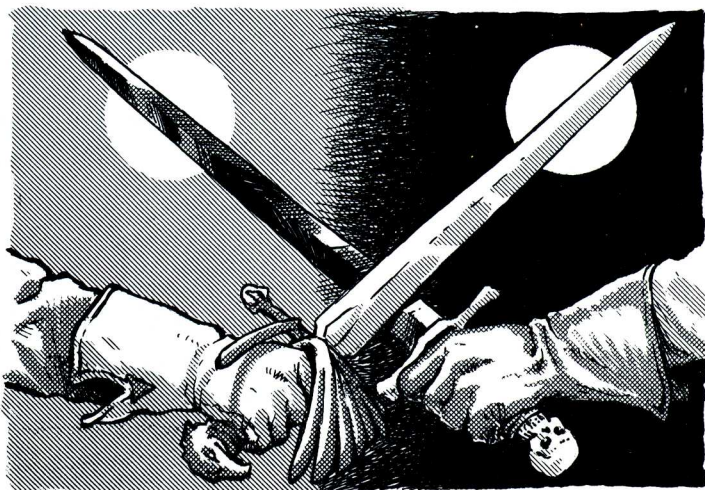
The Knights' Spur

Like I said before, the Knights' Spur was an afterthought. The people of Palanthas built it so that they could seal up the gates of the Tower and man a smaller outpost.

You'll find only three levels in the Spur, and one of them is just a passage-

way through to the Westgate Pass. I figure a team of a dozen or less could keep this place running smoothly. For more than four hundred years, this part of the compound is the only part that has been kept habitable. I've stayed here on a few long trips. It's not as cozy as the inn back in Yarus, but I always feel safe behind these walls.

You have to be careful, though. I don't think that anyone lives there right now, but the Dark Knights or Skie sometimes



send spies to stay in the Spur just so they can keep an eye on who is coming and going through the pass.

The bottom floor is the way through to the pass. One of those huge gates stands at either end, with another one in the middle and a few portcullises in-between. One of the toughest parts about building the Spur must have been figuring out what to do with the stream that runs down from the mountains and onto the plains. They couldn't just block it up or the Tower would turn into a dam! So they made a ravine through the building and dropped portcullises all along it to be sure no one just slipped through under their noses.

Just about the only things on the middle floor are a small chapel and a big

meeting chamber. That's where the Council of Knights met before the Dark Knights attacked. They planned the entire defense of the Tower in that room—imagine it!

Stairwells at the back lead up to the third floor and into the two steepled towers. Another tower (one of the ones attached to the original wall) makes this probably the best defended part of the compound.

The third floor is the living area for the Spur. You can find the Lords' rooms, general barracks, a map room, kitchen, and dining hall there. They're not really the style that the Lord Knights were probably used to. In fact, they look nowhere near as nice as the rooms in the main Tower, but they served their purpose. Like mama says, anywhere you put the cow—that's the barn!

The Solamníc Plains

Well, this is as far as I can take you. I have to get back to the farm; mama's expectin' me to head back into Palanthas and buy us a new milking cow.

You're welcome to come back with me—the gods know I like the company. But folks like you have the dust of the road on your cloaks and the horizon in your eyes. You never stay in one place long. Well, if you're gonna keep on traveling, let me give you a few words of advice.

Farms and grasslands once filled the plains to the south and east, but Skie's changed all that. Look out there—what

do you see? Sand. Nothing but sand and dust. The Knights' High Road still runs across the plain, but you won't find a friendly face for three days' journey, unless you're lucky enough to come across a desert barbarian's village. They moved into this area when the land was changed to desert. Of course, all the farmers have either moved to Palanthas or Coastlund, so make sure you take enough water and food because you can't count on finding any between here and Relgoth, a city on the way to Vingaard Keep. The water holes that the barbarians live by dry up after a time, so they move fairly regularly.

If you decide to visit Relgoth, be careful. The Bastion of Darkness, a Dark Knight stronghold, is in the city. I've heard that they have an Old City district and a New City district just like Palanthas, but I don't know much more than that. If you reach Vingaard Keep, you won't find it much of a relief. The castle is as deserted as the Clerist's, though it might be in better shape. The good news, of course, is that you're almost out of Skie's realm. Bad news is that you'll have to go into Nightlund, and from what I hear, the undead beasts you'll meet there will make you want to turn right back into the desert!

If you ask me, I'd say turn around and come back with me to Palanthas. The city is less than two days away, and a body can still go anywhere or get anything from that city. Say what you will about the government, *I'd* rather live here than anywhere else in Ansalon!



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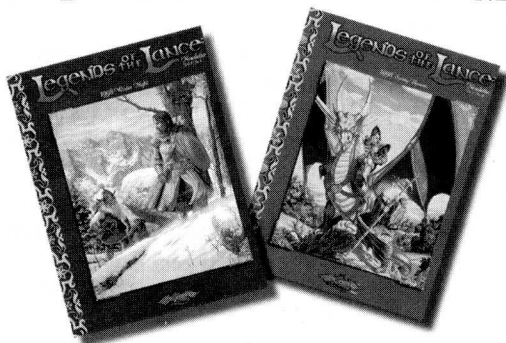
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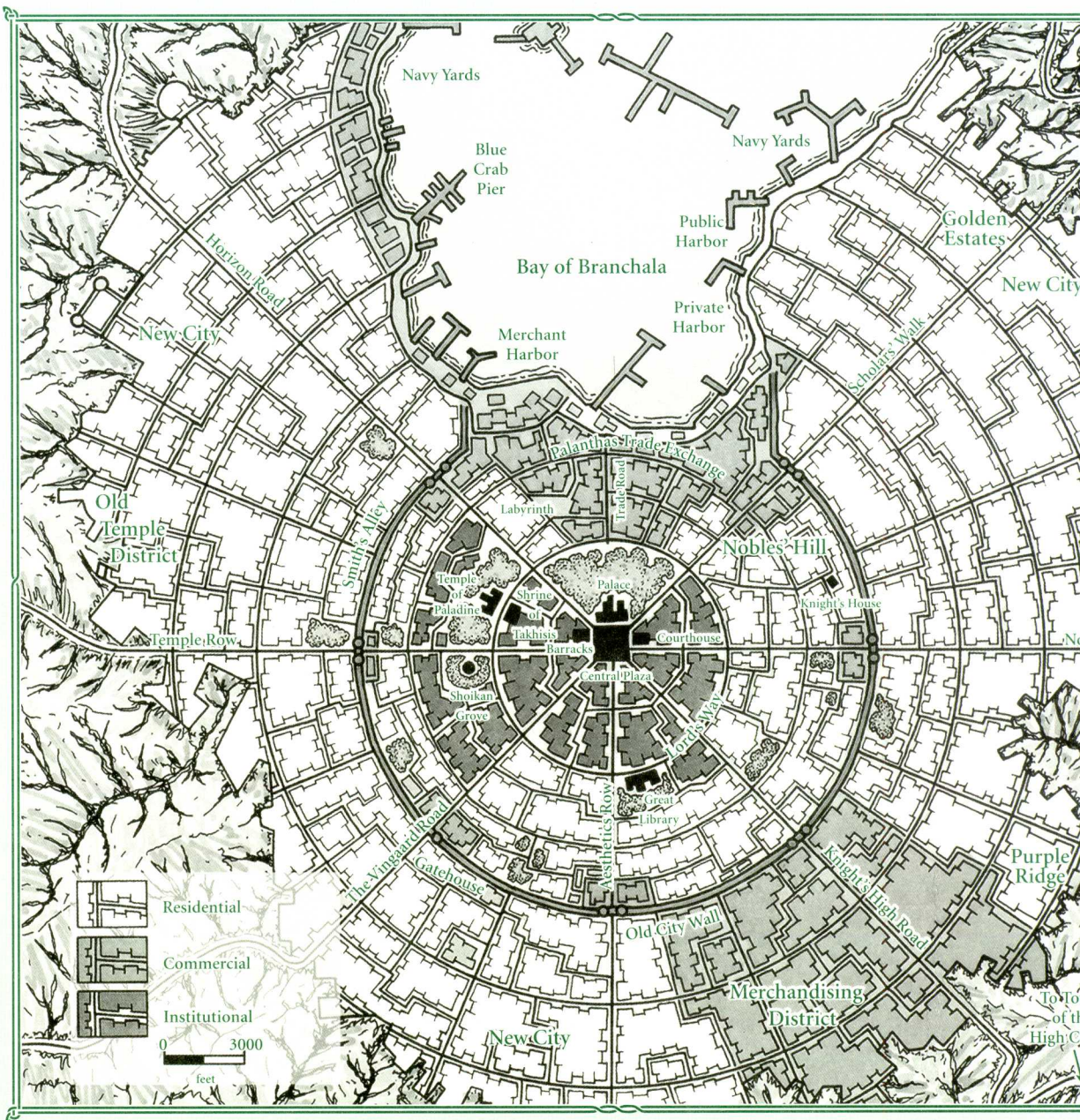
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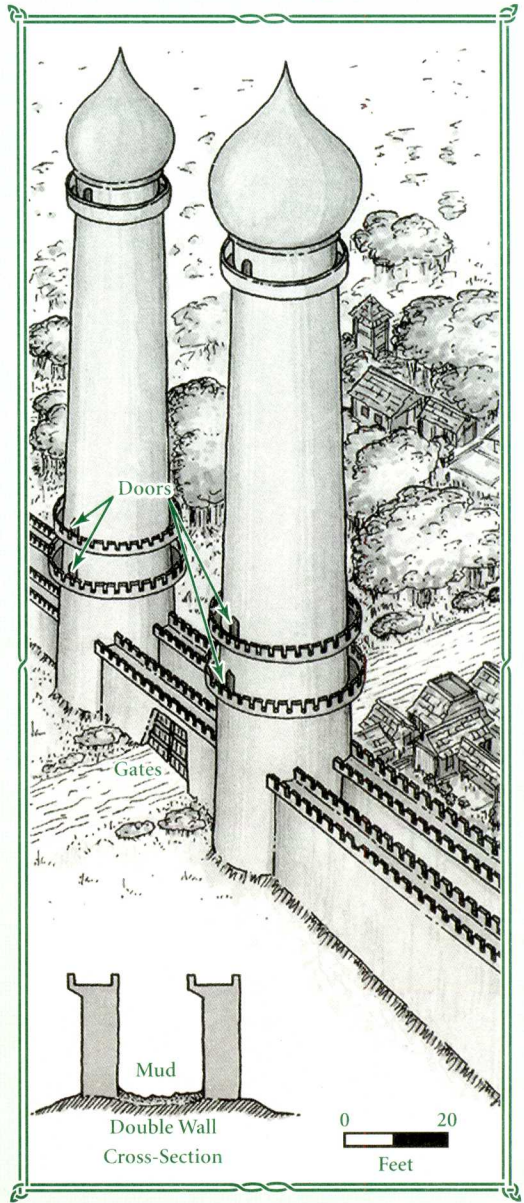


PALANTHAS



*Maps generously donated by Here And There cartographer.
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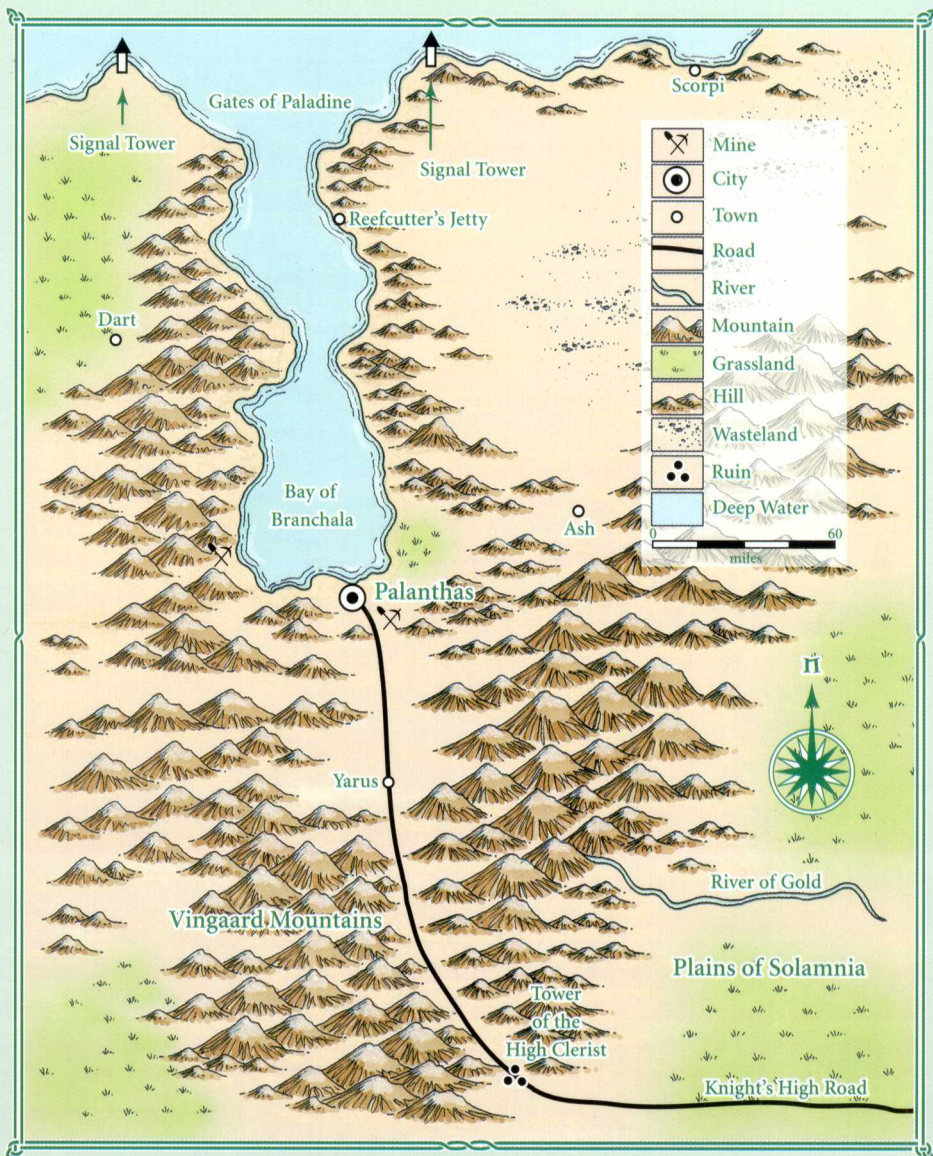
GATEHOUSE MINARETS



“Photographers in the Palanthas Trade Exchange.
you to walk them.”

—Wes Songline, Proprietor

PALANTHAS AND VICINITY



"The sun was sinking behind the snow-capped mountains, streaking the sky with red and purple. The vibrant colors shimmered on the pure white buildings of Palanthas.... Laurana had never imagined such beauty could exist in the world of humans."

*—The Golden General's reflections,
Dragons of Spring Dawning*

PALANTHAS

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